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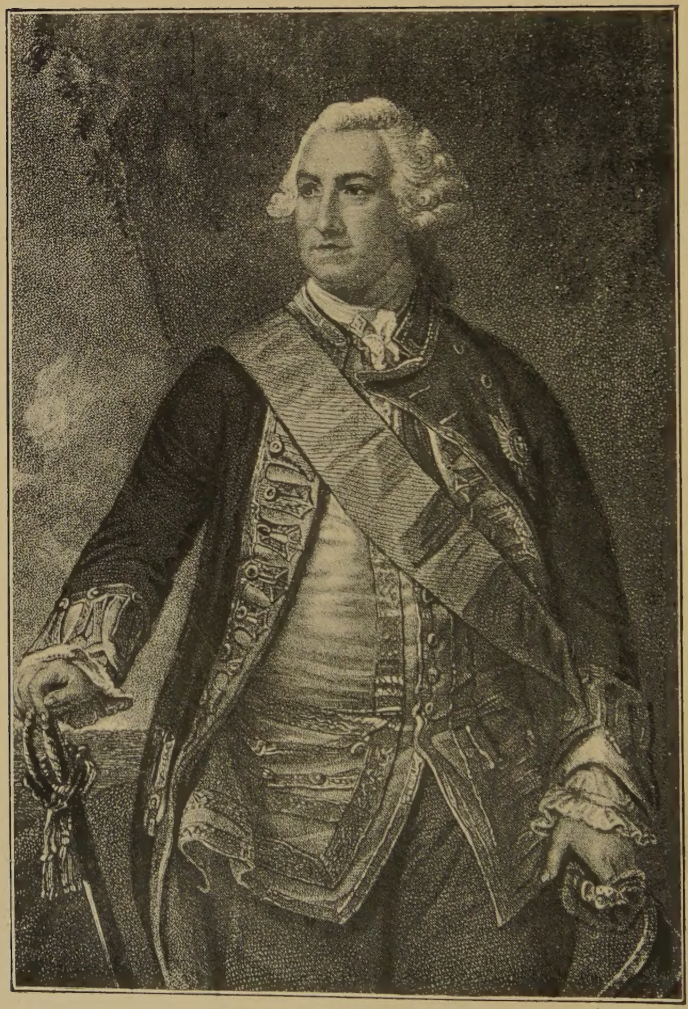

EDWARD LORD HAWKE.

THE LIFE

OF

EDWARD LORD HAWKE

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET, VICE-ADMIRAL OF GREAT BRITAIN,
AND FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY FROM 1766 TO 1771.

BY

MONTAGU BURROWS,

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AND FELLOW OF ALL SOULS; F.S.A., ETC.
OFFICIER DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE, FRANCE.

NEW EDITION. REVISED AND CONDENSED.

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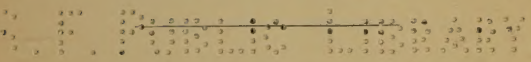

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PREFACE.

IN order to bring the new edition of Lord Hawke's Life within the limits required for circulation in the present day, it has been necessary to change its character in one important respect. When it was first written there was so little known about the great admiral and his special work in the development of the British Navy that it was thought best to give a sketch of the condition of the naval service at and about his period, and also to enter more fully into the politics of his time than was necessary for a mere biography. Some sort of frame-work for the picture appeared desirable.

Under existing circumstances so large a book is not required. Great attention has been drawn to naval history during the last few years, principally by means of the late splendid and popular Naval Exhibition at Chelsea, and by Captain Mahan's instructive work on "Sea Power." The influences derived from both these sources may be already traced, not only in history but in many other directions. Popular monographs on naval heroes have appeared in quick succession; and the Navy Records Society, under the

able management of its founder, Professor Laughton, numbers some five hundred subscribers. To him the country is also deeply indebted for his luminous accounts of naval officers in the "Dictionary of National Biography." From all these materials, and from improved histories of England, it may be hoped that a new and complete history of the Royal Navy may before very long be compiled.

Meanwhile the following "revised and condensed" Life of the "Father of the Royal Navy" is presented to the reader;—the same essentially as before, but shorn of such matters as lay beyond the immediate scope of the work. The author takes this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the favour with which the Life of Lord Hawke has been received by naval officers generally, and especially to thank Admiral Sir Richard Vesey Hamilton, G.C.B., for the assistance he has kindly given in preparing the new edition. It is an honour that the book should be connected with the name of so distinguished an officer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	LORD HAWKE'S PLACE IN HISTORY	1
II.	EARLY HISTORY AND SERVICES OF LORD HAWKE.—1705—1743	9
III.	HAWKE AT THE BATTLE OF ADMIRAL MATHEWS, OFF TOULON, AND IN COMMAND OF SQUADRONS.—1743—1746 ...	21
IV.	HAWKE'S BATTLE WITH THE FRENCH OFF USHANT IN 1747	55
V.	HAWKE'S POSITION DURING THE PEACE AND AT THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN YEARS WAR.—CONDITION OF THE GOVERNMENT. —1748—1756.	91
VI.	THE ROCHEFORT EXPEDITION.—1757	113
VII.	HAWKE'S SHARE IN THE DESCENTS ON FRANCE IN 1758	166
VIII.	THE BLOCKADE OF BREST.—1759	188
IX.	THE BATTLE OF QUIBERON.—1759	220
X.	LAST SERVICES.—1760—1771	257
XI.	PEERAGE, RETIREMENT, AND DEATH.—1771—1781	295
INDEX		321

ERRATA.

Page 11, line 20, for "Naval," read "National."
,, 51, ,, 26, ,, "you," read "your."
,, 74, ,, 24, ,, "its," read "the."
,, 74, ,, 24, after "size," insert "of ships."
,, 115, ,, 24, transfer "one" to end of line.
,, 115, ,, 25, for "was," read "had been."

THE LIFE

OF

ADMIRAL LORD HAWKE.

CHAPTER I.

LORD HAWKE'S PLACE IN HISTORY.

It may be hoped that it is no longer necessary to vindicate the place which has of late years been assigned to Lord Hawke in naval history, that is to say, in the history of Great Britain. It will be seen in the following pages that he was the parent of the modern Royal Navy in a sense which can be attributed to no one else; and we shall trace in his manly character the highest type to which the thorough, old-fashioned British seaman and gentleman had attained. We shall identify him as the admiral who systematically and successfully broke through the antiquated traditions which had hampered his gallant predecessors for nearly a century, and as the author of the modern practice of resting satisfied with nothing short of destroying the enemy whenever and wherever he could be found.

Unlike most of those who have risen to high commands in the Royal Navy, Hawke served a rather long apprenticeship in the junior ranks of the profession, a circumstance which materially helped him in after life. It was fortunate, both for himself and his country, that he was thus prepared to make his way when the war, first with Spain and then with France and Spain combined, broke out; happy also that he was not concerned in the misfortunes which seemed to pursue Vernon's squadrons in the West Indies, after his first and only success at Portobello. The battle off Toulon in 1744, where Admirals Mathews and Lestock proved to demonstration how things ought not to be done, first brought Captain Hawke before the notice of his countrymen, and especially of King George II. It was soon discovered that the nation possessed in this hitherto little known officer the exact man who was required to make the naval service what it ought to be.

The appearance of Hawke on the stage was timely. The long peace which succeeded to the wars of William III. and Anne did not favour the formation of any large number of officers of a high type. For nearly a century there had been no instance of a consummate commander such as Blake had been, and Rodney and Nelson were destined to be, and without great leaders the standard of a navy does not rise to its full height. But besides the effects of a long peace, the prevailing system of naval tactics had much to do with this painful depression of the naval service, and requires a few words of explanation.

The principle of fighting fleets in line, though by

no means then practised for the first time, grew into an elaborate system during the Dutch wars of the seventeenth century. With it crept in also the practice of fighting indecisive battles. But the system must not be condemned on that account. Not only had this orderly manner of fighting become a necessity when fleets were assembled in vast numbers—sometimes a hundred on each side—but it was the natural product of an age of improved military tactics and a scientific treatment of the art of war. The process of improvement was natural and unavoidable; so also, unfortunately, was the process by which this improved naval science came to be wrongly applied. The whole mind of the profession was cramped and narrowed by an absurd adherence to system without making allowance for circumstances.

The main reasons for fighting in line, broadside to broadside, each division sailing opposite to its counterpart in the enemy's line, were intelligible enough, and spoke to the instincts of every naval officer. The motions of the divisional admiral might in this way, and this alone, be accurately followed, and his signals observed; and thus the disasters proceeding from isolation and independent action on the part of captains of ships, often at first imperfectly trained, and likely enough to make mistakes of all kinds, were minimised. The fleet was, theoretically at least, one vast machine. Still more advantageous was the system when fleets could be kept cruising together for considerable periods. The constant practice of sailing in close order, exercising as it did all the skill and vigilance of the officers, and teaching each of

them to regard himself as a factor in the whole body, caused them to acquire a habit of comprehending whatever was required, and performing it, as it were, unconsciously. We hear very little indeed of ships fouling one another on sea-cruises ; and the seamanship which could keep together old, rotten vessels, with rotten spars, up to the very last moment, for fear of the enemy taking advantage of their absence while undergoing repairs, was never so signally displayed as in these wars. In presence of the hostile force the fleet tacked, or more usually wore, with unerring judgment, according to the manœuvres of the enemy or the shifts of wind, ready at the signal to take advantage of the errors he might commit.

But long custom had prevented naval officers in general from perceiving that the system was, after all, only a rudimentary stage of tactics ; and that, however useful, it was by no means so important for the smaller kind of squadrons with which battles were fought when colonies had to be protected, and fleets of merchant vessels convoyed, as for large fleets ; and, moreover, that it was wholly unfitted for dealing with an enemy desirous of avoiding an engagement. What was worse, as we have said, it inevitably led to indecisive combats. The Admiralty Instructions were peremptory on the subject ; courts-martial made the verdict hinge upon it. Even the best admirals were most seriously hampered by it. The idea prevailed that if the battle were fought according to rule, it was a secondary question whether it was decisive or not.

It was Hawke's merit that he began at the other

end. His one object was to make the action decisive, to destroy the enemy. The line was to be formed in the first instance as far as possible, but the effort to maintain it discarded as soon as anything better could be done. He made a practice, both by precept and example, of totally disregarding all laws, customs, and traditions to the contrary, and his uniform success revolutionised the service. It was a great step towards the further advance made by Rodney in "breaking the line," and thus doubling the force brought to bear on each of the enemy's ships so cut off, a practice brought to perfection by Nelson. Rodney and Howe were Hawke's chief captains, his pupils. From him they learnt the general principles which they afterwards developed with so much success.

Hawke's method was not, indeed, entirely novel. It had been practised by Sir George Byng, the second Lord Torrington, off Cape Passaro, by Admiral Mathews off Toulon, and again by Anson in his capture of a French squadron off Cape Finisterre. But the first and third of these were victories over very inferior fleets, making the best of their way in headlong flight. The second was accompanied by so many disgraceful blunders that the boldness of the admiral's act in bearing down upon his enemy never received due credit, and the court-martial held upon him broke him for "breaking the line." Hawke's share in changing naval opinion was of a very different character. He began to give a sort of private lesson of his own in Mathews' battle by bearing down out of the line, and capturing the Spanish ship "Poder," which had already proved

herself superior to several of her opposites in the line and other ships. He followed it up in his action of October 14th, 1747, when his own ship bore the brunt of the battle; and he gave the finishing blow to the old traditions by his splendid conquest of the French fleet at Quiberon. This battle is unequalled in history. It was fought amidst rocks and shoals on a lee-shore, during a heavy gale of wind, which was driving in full force before it the waves of the Bay of Biscay; and it completely broke up the fleet of the enemy.

These were, however, only the luminous and conspicuous points in a career which, during the wars which founded the British Empire, was one long round of arduous service, consummately well performed. They were the rewards of years of anxious cruising in the British Channel and the Bay of Biscay, winter and summer, amidst furious gales, often with ships ill-fitted for such work, and with crews whose hard fare was made ten times worse by the abuses which even an Anson could not eradicate from the victualling offices. The paternal care which Hawke bestowed upon those crews, by means of which he kept them ever ready and willing for their work, as well as the judicious relations in which he stood with his officers, were far from common in those days. We shall observe not only the patriotism, courage, and endurance of the man, but his honesty, patience, dignity, and good sense. His just rights and those of his officers he exacted, but he never asked a favour for himself, and scarcely ever for others. It was thus, by reason of conduct, temper, and character, as well

as for his great military qualities, that he was selected out of the whole navy as the sword and shield of England; and it was thus, though they now and then forgot their obligations to him, that he obtained the confidence of the English people. Whoever might be the officers entrusted with distant expeditions, the country never felt safe unless Hawke was kept at hand to command the home fleets. Then people felt, as about Nelson in later times, that they could sleep in their beds.

But having mentioned the great hero of modern days, this may be the place to remark that Hawke's nature was far more akin to that of Blake than to that of Nelson. A man of few words, but with a fund of controlled energy which now and then broke out with volcanic force, strict, accurate, impartial, there was nothing of Nelson's romantic genius in his composition, nothing to drive people into fits of passionate excitement. Nothing could be further from his character than to flatter the mob, or show any care for its praise or censure. He was to do his duty, and praise must follow him. "A peerage or Westminster Abbey,"—if indeed Nelson ever used the expression,—was so far from representing his idea of service that he always to the last "disdained to ask"* for that dignity, which was indeed only conferred upon him a little before his death, and seventeen years after his great battle, the crowning victory of the Imperial war.

The neglect with which Hawke's memory has

* Inscription on Hawke's monument, at North Stoneham, Hants.

been treated is due to various causes external to himself. One may be specially mentioned. He was for nearly thirty years the Whig Member for Portsmouth, and identified with that party. Party spirit ran at that time to an unexampled height, and just when he died the star of the Whigs set. The very next year after his death the laurels of Rodney, the Tory captor of De Grasse, completely overshadowed those of the Whig conqueror of Conflans; Howe followed Rodney, and soon Nelson and his paladins filled, to the eyes of the nation, the whole firmament of naval glory. But if we look to the feeling shown by the country at the loss of "the father of the British navy," as Keppel called him in the House of Commons, it will not be too much to say that the people felt his death more than they did that of any public man of the period, except Lord Chatham. Burke spoke of him in the House as "the great Lord Hawke"; the newspapers and periodicals of the day indulged in a sort of apotheosis of the hero, about the details of whose career they were, however, singularly ill-informed; and Keppel, quoting his authority on a nautical question, two or three months later, declared that "having sat with him at the Board he knew his conduct both in his civil and military capacity; and that he had left behind him a name unrivalled in the maritime records of his country."*

* "Life of Viscount Keppel," vol. ii. p. 363.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY HISTORY AND SERVICES OF LORD HAWKE.

1705—1743.

THERE is very little known about the ancestors in the paternal line of Admiral Lord Hawke. His grandfather, a London merchant, had, like his ancestors for many generations, been settled at Treriven (or Treraven), in the parish of St. Cleather, in Cornwall, about half-way between Launceston and Tintagel Head. Cornwall has thus the honour of having produced the two greatest admirals of the period, Hawke and Boscawen. But our admiral's father, Edward Hawke, was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, who seems to have kept up no connection with that county, and to have retired to Docking in Norfolk, where he died in 1718, at the age of fifty. Our hero was his only son.

We know more about the admiral's mother, Elizabeth Bladen. She came of a family of Yorkshire squires, the Bladens of Hemsworth, who had been settled there since the time of Queen Elizabeth. Her father, like Edward Hawke, was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and her mother a daughter of Sir William Fairfax of Steeton, in Yorkshire. Her

grandfather was Dr. Thomas Bladen, Dean of Ardfert, and her grandmother Sarah, daughter of the second Lord Blayney. Mr. Hawke was her second husband, she having been previously married to Colonel Ruthven.

What is more important in reference to her son's career is that she had a brother who was a person of some distinction, Colonel Martin Bladen, under whose auspices young Hawke was sent to sea, and to whom he owed much.

Martin Bladen had served under Marlborough, was for a time Controller of the Mint, and held for many years the important office of "Commissioner of Trade and Plantations." To this office he perhaps owed his seat for Portsmouth, which he represented in five successive Parliaments; and, as a considerable authority on commercial and colonial questions, he was thus able to afford Sir Robert Walpole efficient support in the debates which preceded the Spanish war of 1739, and became a Privy Councillor. He combined with politics and official life a taste for literature, which he evinced by dedicating to his old chief, Marlborough, a translation of "Cæsar's Commentaries." In consequence of his marriage with the heiress of Aldborough Hatch, in Essex, he settled at that place, and died in 1746. His position gave him facilities for placing his nephew in the Royal Navy, and as the father died just when the boy was old enough to go to sea, he seems to have taken, up to the time of his death, a father's place to the young officer long after he ceased to be his ward. It was he also who bequeathed him, in all

probability, the political opinions which the Portsmouth of those days required of her Member.

Young Hawke was now about twelve years old, having been born in 1705, a date which, it is necessary to say,—since the Peerages have agreed to bring him into the world in 1716,—is ascertained from the monument at North Stoneham, near Southampton, and agrees with all we know of his earlier days from other documents. Many notices of the admiral have been framed on the erroneous supposition of the later date, and therefore contain references to his early promotion, the youthful age at which he fought his battles, and his want of preparatory service,—the whole of which is entirely gratuitous.

Since the first edition of this book was published some notices of Hawke's earlier career have been recovered from the Record Office by Professor Laughton. Under the name of "Hawke" in the "Dictionary of Naval Biography," he tells us that our hero—

entered the Navy on 20th of February, 1719-20 as a volunteer on board the "Seahorse," commanded by Captain Thomas Durell, and served in her on the North American and West Indian station till 1725, when on her coming home he passed his examination on 2nd June. The same day he entered, with the rating of able seaman, on board the "Kinsale," with Captain Richard Girdlington, and served in her on the west coast of Africa and in the West Indies, including a month with the squadron off Portobello under Hosier, till she paid off at Woolwich on 11th July, 1727. . . . On 11th April, 1729, he was promoted to be third lieutenant of the "Portland," commanded by Captain Rowzier, in the Channel. On 25th November, he was moved into the "Leopard" with Captain (afterwards

Sir Peter) Warren ; and on her paying off a month later (22nd December) he was placed on half-pay, till, on 19th May, 1731, he was appointed fourth lieutenant of the "Edinburgh," with Sir Chaloner Ogle, one of the fleet sent to the Mediterranean under Sir Charles Wager. On her coming home he was discharged, 27th December, and after a fortnight on half-pay was appointed (15th January, 1731-2) to the "Scarborough," with his old captain, Durell, and again sent to the North American station. On 10th November, 1732, being then at Boston, he was discharged to the "Flamborough" for a passage to the "Kingston," carrying the broad pennant of Sir Chaloner Ogle as Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica. On 24th December he joined the "Kingston" as first lieutenant ; on 13th April, 1733, he was promoted by Ogle to be commander of the "Wolf" sloop, and again, on 20th March, 1733-4, to be captain of the "Flamborough." In her he continued till 5th September, 1735, when, on her arrival in England, she was paid off, and Hawke placed on half-pay.

Thus it was under Durell and Ogle that Hawke learnt his profession ; and we shall see that the month which he served under Warren may have been useful in after times. As he had already spent many years on the New England and West Indian stations, so he was destined to spend there the whole period of his service as commander and post-captain, till he received his appointment to the "Berwick," and took his part in the great events of which the Mediterranean was the scene in 1744. In thus being trained for his work in American waters he resembled Nelson, but, unlike him, he never found himself there again. The variety of climates, the absence of dockyards, and the delicate nature of the service in the midst of the Spanish settlements, made it an excellent station for forming an officer.

The violent hurricanes which beset the cruiser, and the necessity for periodically heaving down the ship, gave lessons in seamanship which could not be learnt so well elsewhere, and the responsibility of an officer was eminently called forth in those seas.

Of the next four years after paying off the "Flamborough" in September, 1735, there is no record whatever; and as there were no signs of war, and as we know that our captain married during this period, we may be sure that he spent it on shore. It was the first time, with the exception of a few months, that he had spent on shore since he went to sea,—a period of sixteen years, for the two last of which he had been in responsible command. He was now an experienced officer in his thirtieth year, and had passed through a more prosperous career than most of his brother officers; though fortunate in escaping the rapid promotion to the rank of post-captain which some others, who were born, as the saying is, "with a silver spoon in their mouth," succeeded in obtaining. Colonel Bladen's interest, and perhaps his own merits, were enough to give him a fair lift out of the mass of unfortunate men who never got farther than lieutenants, if so far.

The exact date of Captain Hawke's marriage is not known within a year or two, but it was probably in 1738, when he was 33 and his bride 18. It could not have been later, as the Register of Barking in Essex records the burial of two infant daughters of "Captain Edward Hawke," one on September 13th, 1739, and the other on April 3rd, 1740. Of this lady there is

nothing more to tell than can be gathered from her pedigree and her monument. She was "the daughter and sole heir of Walter Brooke, Esq., of Burton Hall, co. York," her father having inherited Gateforth in direct descent from Humphrey Brooke, who, like the Bladens, had settled in Yorkshire in the time of Elizabeth, and bought the manor of Gateforth from Lord Darcy in 1564. Catharine Brooke was also, through her mother, the heiress of the Hammonds of Scarthingwell, Towton, and Saxton in Yorkshire; and these properties she brought with her to her husband. The family had lived at Scarthingwell Hall, a better house than Towton Hall, but it was the name of the latter property which Lord Hawke selected for his title. It was a very natural marriage, as the lady was connected with the Bladens, her uncle having been married to Catharine Maria Frances, sister of Colonel Bladen and of Mrs. Hawke, her husband's mother.

The pompous inscriptions on monuments are proverbially untrustworthy as to their laudations of moral excellences and personal gifts; but if we may trust what is stated in the present case as to Lady Hawke with the same confidence which we certainly can place in the account of the merits of her husband, the pair fairly exemplified the words of the poet—

None but the brave deserve the fair.

It may be as well to give the whole inscription here, as it stands in North Stoneham church, the parish in which Swathling, Lord Hawke's principal residence, was situated.

This monument is sacred to the memory of Edward Hawke, Lord Hawke, Baron of Towton, in the county of York, Knight

of the Bath, Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, &c., who died October 17th, 1781, aged 76. The bravery of his soul was equal to the dangers he encountered; the cautious intrepidity of his deliberations superior even to the conquests he obtained. The annals of his life compose a period of naval glory unparalleled in later times: for wherever he sailed victory attended him. A prince unsolicited conferred on him dignities which he disdained to ask.

This monument is also sacred to the memory of Catharine, Lady Hawke, his wife, the beauty of whose person was excelled only by the accomplished elegance of her mind. She died October 27th, 1756, aged 36. In the conjugal, parental, and social duties of private life, they were equalled by few, excelled by none.

The fact of the two first children of this marriage having been buried as infants in Barking churchyard suggests, what we might have expected from the manner in which Colonel Martin Bladen fulfilled his duty to his nephew, that the young couple found a residence either with him at Aldborough Hatch, which was in Barking parish, or close by him. In all four of the tattered letters from him to Hawke which have but just escaped destruction, dated in 1739 and 1742, he uses the language of a father, both towards his "dear Ned" and "Kitty" his wife; and we may fairly suppose that he had been the person concerned in bringing about the marriage, which his position as well as family connection would facilitate. He took care of her during Hawke's absence in the West Indies in command of the "Portland" frigate of 50 guns, which he commissioned in 1739. But before the end of her commission, it would seem, by a letter from the colonel, dated May 29, 1742, that "Kitty" had gone out to join her husband at Barbadoes. The

letter also shows that the captain's mother was still living. With her, probably, Hawke's only sister, Frances, who married the son of Dr. Henry Maule, Bishop of Dromore, lived till that event took place.

In these letters, for which we have no space, we have some dim outlines of a happy family-picture, which suggests a confirmation of the monumental inscription. From the mention of "Kitty" it seems that she came home in her husband's ship. We shall only hear of her once more, and that incidentally. She certainly did not make any more such voyages. The eldest son, who succeeded to his father's title, was born on April 29th, 1744; the second in December, 1746, and the third, who was killed by a fall from his horse, in 1750. He had also a daughter, Catharine, who appears to have been the comfort of her father's life in declining years.

Swathling became the home of the family. Perhaps it was not till after the death of the good uncle that they moved from Essex, and probably in connection with the seat for Portsmouth which fell to Hawke in 1747. To live on his Yorkshire property was out of the question for one who was tied for the next sixteen years to the south coast of England by the bonds of incessant sea service, as well as for a still longer time by Parliamentary obligations. In his later years the admiral had a house at Sunbury in Middlesex, called "Hawke House," where he died. His mother died amongst her Yorkshire kin, and was buried at Bolton Percy.

Lady Hawke died young, while her husband was

absent as Commander-in-Chief. He never married again. If we may judge by some indications in letters still extant, his eldest son grew up to take a full share in his father's confidence. To conclude this scanty notice of the early days of Lord Hawke, it may be remarked that subsequent generations of the family have shown their appreciation of the good man to whom they owed so much, by perpetuating both his names, Martin and Bladen, in their children.

In order to make the domestic history, however brief, intelligible it has been necessary to pass over the period of Hawke's service in the "Portland," to which we must now return. This ship had been commissioned, and for some time commanded, by the Hon. John Byng; but on July 30th, 1739, by which time the war had really commenced, though not yet declared, Hawke received his commission to her,—no doubt through the influence of his uncle,—and was ordered to prepare to take out Byng's brother, the Hon. Robert Byng, as Governor of Barbadoes.

Six days before this Vernon had sailed with his squadron for Portobello. Hawke, as we have said, was perhaps fortunate in not being concerned with his operations, which eventually coloured with misfortune the career of nearly all who came within their sphere. Nor was his ship to be one of Anson's immortal band. She was to make Barbadoes her head-quarters, and to protect that and the adjacent islands, convoying fleets of merchant ships to the Tortugas and elsewhere, and taking her chance of whatever might turn up on that part of the West Indian station.

If the French had followed up the policy they at first adopted, of making a vigorous effort to support Spain in the West Indies, according to their Treaty, the "Portland" would no doubt have supplied her captain with some earlier experience of active service in war than he actually gained; but a series of storms, and then—in consequence of the death of the Emperor Charles VI.—a change of policy, brought their three West Indian squadrons to a futile end; and the period of nearly four years which elapsed before the "Portland" was paid off will throw but little light on the subject of our memoir. What we obtain is but a glimpse or two of preparatory training before his really public life began.

Hawke obtained the assent of the Admiralty to his request that he might refit each year at Boston during the hurricane months in the West Indies, and his Journal is suggestive as to the danger attending the unhealthiness of cruising in those seas. For months together not a week occurs without the record of the death of some of the crew; and the notices grow so monotonous that the captain soon drops the formal "departed this life," and merely writes "died." But, though he had passed so much of his life in the West Indies, we never meet with any indication of his own ill-health till much later in life, when the overwhelming fatigues and responsibilities of his commands tell heavily upon his constitution, which could hardly have escaped previous damage had he not been a man of temperate habits. The Peace of Paris in 1763 probably saved his life for many years.

No doubt a large part of this great unhealthiness of the "Portland's" crew was due to the state of the ship; as, indeed, it probably was in most cases. She was extremely old, and ought to have been broken up long before. In a letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty, on his arrival in England to pay off, he says his ship is always leaking. "Whenever it rains there is not a man in the ship that has even a dry place to sleep in, she being what the carpenters call 'iron-sick,'" which meant, no doubt, that the wood was too rotten to hold the iron bolts. He goes on to report that he would proceed to the Downs, but is afraid to move farther than Portland without another ship in company. The state of Anson's ships will recur to the memory as a pendant to this picture.

In a letter to the Admiralty, describing in detail how he was dismasted in a hurricane on his passage from Barbadoes to Boston, he reports that the stumps of the old masts when taken out were found to be so rotten that they crumbled to powder, and that a stick was driven a full yard into the foremast. The anxiety he shows to convince their Lordships that every care had been taken to save the spars, suggests that the Board was regarded even in those days with a due amount of awe; and he ends with a characteristic ejaculation: "Thank God, in all the misfortune I lost not one man." That was certainly no small praise to his seamanship, judgment, and—perhaps we ought to say—humanity.

In Hawke's last letter from the "Portland" before paying off, he presses on the Admiralty the claims of some of his officers with a touch of humour: "Had

they been in England during the time of so many preferments they might have stood some chance of coming in with the rest of mankind."

This brief sketch of Hawke's early career may conclude with the remark that Sir John Barrow, the author of the "Life of Lord Anson," must have taken little advantage of the stores of information open to him as Secretary to the Admiralty, when he could make the following remark: "Hawke at this time (1747) was an officer not much known, and from the year 1734, when he was made captain, had chiefly remained on shore until, in 1743, he was appointed to the 'Berwick,' of 74 guns, and ordered to join Admiral Mathews." We shall see that he was extremely well known some years before 1747. As to his "chiefly remaining on shore" it is evident that this writer, like most others, was unaware that Hawke had already commanded both the "Flamborough" and the "Portland." The mistake is possibly attributable to the fact that in the lists of ships given in the books of the last century, the name "Hawes" is placed opposite that of the "Portland," instead of that of our hero; and people have copied from one another without enquiry.

CHAPTER III.

HAWKE AT THE BATTLE OF ADMIRAL MATHEWS OFF TOULON, AND IN COMMAND OF SQUADRONS.

1743—1746.

COLONEL MARTIN BLADEN'S good-natured desire to have a little of his nephew's company at Aldborough Hatch was very sparingly gratified. Captain Hawke paid off the "Portland" on March 17th, 174$\frac{2}{3}$; and three months afterwards, on June 28th, 1743, his first letter to the Admiralty is dated from H.M.S. "Berwick," a ship of 70 guns. Neither he nor his uncle were likely to let the Admiralty alone at such a moment; for the junction of the French fleet at Brest under De Court with that of the Spaniards in the Mediterranean, which had been previously effected in 1741, and had then obliged Admiral Haddock to decline an engagement with a force double his own, was now again likely to be dangerous. Reinforcements had been sent out under Commodore Lestock, who, on Haddock's resignation, was raised to the rank of rear-admiral, and, in temporary command of the whole fleet, blockaded the combined fleets in Toulon. But more ships were wanted in order to match the two fleets if they should attempt

to come out of harbour; and a battle on a grand scale was expected.

To command this formidable English armament Admiral Mathews had been appointed in 1742; and the "Berwick" was one of the last ships added to his numbers. Fortunately, we have now the advantage of being able to refer to her captain's own official letters preserved in the family, but lost at the Admiralty, or at any rate not to be found now. Later on, we discover letters at the Record Office which are not to be found in the private collection; and, curiously enough, these are some of the most interesting, since they are papers of a more private, and therefore characteristic nature, which the writer did not choose to trust to his own Letter-book. The two collections in fact very conveniently supplement one another.

We are first of all introduced to the subject of Impressment. It may be well to know what it really was in those days, instead of gathering our ideas from works of fiction.

From the moment of the captain's appointment we find ourselves in the midst of a whirl and bustle which indicates plainly enough the difficulty of the contest in which the country had embarked. The great fleets in the Mediterranean and West Indies had taken up all the seamen who could be in any manner obtained; and to man the "Berwick" there was nothing for it but a "hot press." The Admiralty are hastening the ship to sea, but where are the men? Hawke has to report that "the pilot will not take charge of her" down the river, from Deptford, where

she is fitting out, "unless she has at least four hundred men on board." He has to send a tender to cruise off Hull and Yarmouth "upon the trade." When the men are obtained, he has infinite difficulty to keep them from deserting. On August 12th he writes :—

I expect the tender up the river every hour, and shall be very glad when she comes, as her men will be of great assistance to me in carrying my ship to the Nore, where I long to be, as I am in hopes I shall be able to pick up some men myself when we get there.

On July 11th, having sent off forty men in the tender, he writes :—

I should not have got these men to have gone in her if I had not sent midshipmen all about the town to look after them, and they picked them up by one and two at a time ; and as we got them, put them on board the tender who lay at anchor, to secure them till she was ready to sail.

However, when he had obtained men in sufficient numbers to enable him to drop down the river, his account of their quality is instructive. On August 23rd, he writes from the Nore :—

I beg their Lordships' permission to acquaint them that among the pressed men sent me down by the regulating captains there are several of them very little, puny, weakly fellows that have never been at sea, and I think any officer must allow, can be of little or no service. The reason why I did not complain of them before was because I was willing to get the ship to the Nore as soon as the wind offered fair. This is likewise the case with the men that are come from the "Princess Royal," there being several of them poor little sickly fellows that are of no service, and are more properly to be termed boys than men ; and though a few of these lads are serviceable aboard of ship,

a great number of them distress a large ship like this greatly, and what is worse, most of these poor creatures are now sick; but I shall not presume to put them on shore unless their Lordships will be so good as to give me leave, though there are several of them that, should they stay on board, will breed a sickness in the ship. . . . I beg their Lordships' pardon for mentioning this affair, but I thought it my duty to do it, for when a ship is very badly manned she can be but of very little or no service.

Exactly what he foretold came to pass. He was detained for a convoy, and set sail as second in command under Captain Burrish of the "Dorsetshire," who had charge of it. On October 27th, they are in the Mediterranean, and he reports to his senior officer that he had

123 working men ill; out of that number 84 have fever; 6 or 8 of these are dangerously ill; the rest are mostly troubled with scurvy.

He therefore suggests that he should be allowed to go straight to Port Mahon, and on November 6th, Captain Burrish having still detained him, he, in more pressing language, reiterates his request. No less than 27 of his men are now dangerously ill; his marines are suffering; the surgeon is ill, his first mate dead, and only a couple of very young men left to look after the health of the ship's company. At last he reaches Port Mahon, and lands his sick; but many more of his crew are still falling ill. Nevertheless, immediately afterwards, he reports to Commodore Graves, that he is revictualling his ship, and will soon be ready for sea. He probably picked up some men from merchant ships.

These extracts would be unjustifiable if they did

not both exhibit the real state of the navy at that date, and enhance the merit of Hawke's performances on the day of battle, which quickly came. With so little time to make seamen and gunners out of such a miserable crew, and after such a sweeping epidemic, one would hardly have expected that the "Berwick" was to be the only ship to capture one of the enemy, and her captain to be marked out for future greatness by the manner in which she behaved that day.

Between the date of this correspondence and that of the battle off Toulon we have neither letters nor Journal to guide us. But we know that on December 30th, the Commander-in-Chief was, in virtue of his office as Ambassador to the Court of Sardinia, at Turin, that he heard on that day of the departure of the French squadron, under M. De Roquefeuil, from Brest, and, expecting that the combined fleets would now come out of Toulon, despatched orders to his ships at Port Mahon and elsewhere to meet him off that harbour. Among those which joined his fleet on January 11th, 174$\frac{3}{4}$, was the "Berwick"; and on February 8th his whole force was assembled in the Bay of Hiéres, near Toulon. Meanwhile the Spaniards having received, it would seem, orders to fight, and the French orders to assist them, both came out of Toulon unmolested, and the two great fleets, each of 28 line-of-battle ships, were in sight of each other off that port on February 9th.* The English had the advantage in the number of frigates and 50-gun ships

* It must be remembered that the English had not yet adopted the New Style; so that eleven days must be added to make the dates correspond with those already in use on the Continent

(which, for the first time, were not allowed to form in line of battle), and in the total number of guns ; the enemy in the size of their ships, their speed,—as they were all clean, while the English were foul,—and the number of men on board.

The battle about to be described is perhaps the most difficult to understand of all those fought by Englishmen. Being an unpleasant subject, it is passed over cursorily by our later historians of every description, and indeed it could not be expected that they should afford the space necessary to deal with so complicated a series, both of engagements and courts-martial. It would be agreeable to leave it in exactly the same condition ; but Hawke's share in the matter makes that course impossible. It was out of the Slough of Despond in which this battle shows the navy to have been sunk that Anson and Hawke dragged their noble profession.

It must be premised, to account for the renewed vigour of the French at this moment, as well as for Mathews' position in the Mediterranean, that a change had lately taken place in the international relations of the European Powers, and that it was brought about by the following circumstances. The first and most important of these was the uncompromising attitude of Maria Theresa, so recently hard pressed by the King of Prussia,—she having found herself encouraged by the leading part which England had taken at Dettingen and elsewhere, but still more taking counsel of her own noble heart.

The second was the death of the great Minister, Fleury, which had brought Cardinal Tencin to the

head of French affairs. He had been indebted for his Cardinal's Hat to the English Pretender, and deriving encouragement from the feeble condition of the Pelham Government, enlisted all France in the Jacobite cause. The projected invasion under Marshal Saxe and Admiral De Roquefeuil failed ; but it issued in the Rebellion of 1745.

Lastly, the practical sympathy for the cause of his family in France and Spain evinced by Charles, the Bourbon King of Naples, whom Walpole, under Fleury's fascination, had allowed to succeed peaceably to that throne, had made it necessary to take strong measures with him, as Mathews did.

For the moment the effect of these proceedings was to band the whole Bourbon family in a close union around the young Louis XV., who had just come of age, and was anxious to take an active part in affairs. France and Spain signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau, by which both nations were to assist each other with all their forces against Great Britain ; and intrigues of every kind, hatched in the petty States of Italy, gave full occupation to Mathews and his successors. Austrian Tuscany and Sardinian Piedmont were surrounded by a circle of enemies or questionable friends ; but fortunately for those States these could, as long as the British fleet was supreme in the Mediterranean, be effectually dealt with on the coast of Italy.

Hence the importance of the admiral's position. He had to coerce Genoa and other petty States ; to act as Ambassador at the Court of Turin, and to keep up the closest connection with that of Florence ; while at the same time he was to guard the coasts of France

and Italy, and to be ready to engage both French and Spaniards should they attempt to come out of Toulon.

Some amusing references to Mathews and his captains at this time occur in the correspondence of Horace Mann, the Minister at Florence, with his friend Horace Walpole. Mathews evinces much eccentricity, and goes by the name of "Il Furibondo"; but his spirited behaviour had a great effect.

Tencin's obvious policy was to overwhelm the English in the Mediterranean before they could muster sufficient force to resist; and thus to set Italy free. He hoped at the same time to paralyse England and force her to withdraw from the assistance of Austria, by means of the invasion which Marshal Saxe was to effect under cover of Roquefeuil's fleet. It was well conceived. But the invasion came to nothing. We are now to witness the fact that even the feeble and disreputable battle of Toulon was decisive enough to dissipate the cardinal's plans for the emancipation of the Mediterranean.

Thus began, openly and in earnest, the tremendous struggle of Great Britain with France and Spain, which, since Spain by herself could make no real resistance at sea, had hitherto scarcely taken shape. The animosity with which it now commenced was never appeased till the battles of three generations concluded by leaving Europe pretty much in the state in which it at present exists.

Who could believe that the chance of a decisive battle, thus offered at such a critical moment, should have been thrown away by the diabolical hatred of

the two chief English commanders towards one another? Yet so it was. How it arose has never been satisfactorily explained; but it was probably in connection with politics. Both Mathews and Lestock were Members of Parliament, the former a Tory, but not a Jacobite, the latter a Whig. Both were men of approved courage and professional reputation. But so far pronounced was this antagonism that Mathews is said to have made it a condition of his accepting the appointment that Lestock should be recalled. Perhaps he only expressed a wish to this effect; but no attention was paid to it. It is not altogether surprising, though most blamable, that the Admiralty should have failed to perceive that it could be a matter of importance; but the following account of the two men will explain the phenomenon. Everything in this battle turned upon their conduct and character.

Mathews had seen much and good service; had commanded a line-of-battle ship with the highest credit in Sir George Byng's action, and shown himself not only a man of decided character, but possessed of some cultivation and general ability. The former quality he displayed much after the same fashion as "Tom of Ten Thousand."* Not long before the engagement about to be described he was at Villafranca with a few ships, when a French

* This was the name by which Admiral Thomas Smith was known. He gained it by his conduct in 1728, as a lieutenant of the "Gosport," at Plymouth, when he forced a French frigate to lower her topsails on passing his ship. For this he was broke, but reinstated the next year, and rapidly promoted.

man-of-war passed without paying "the usual and expected compliment" to the English flag. The two countries were not yet at open war. He ordered one of his ships to slip and pursue her; and the French commander continuing obstinate, his vessel was immediately sunk by a broadside from the Englishman.*

His pride also went before his destruction. Let us hear the most favourable account that can be given of it by a writer partial to the admiral:—

> Mr. Mathews is said to have been austere, haughty, and imperious, when in fact he was nothing more than a severe disciplinarian, a rigid observer of forms, and a man who, when in a subordinate station, as he had always paid the utmost obedience to commands, so he now justly thought he had every reason to expect and insist on a similar conduct in those who acted in a subordinate station under him. His pride was not that of a vain upstart, ridiculously puffed up by an unexpected exaltation to a high national trust, but of a man who entertained a proper sense of his own dignity and command; most feelingly alive to every slight insult, which he did not consider as merely personal to himself—for that perhaps he might have forgiven, but as an indignity offered to his station and an injury to the service of his country.†

The manner in which the admiral received his second in command when they first met, scarcely bears out this favourable view. It came out at the court-martial that though Lestock had sent a frigate to meet his chief, which had missed him, the admiral would not listen to any excuse, and reprimanded

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* Campbell's "Lives of the Admirals," vol. iv. p. 39, Edition of 1779.

† Charnock's "Biog. Nav."

him severely and publicly, before some officers of the King of Sardinia who happened to be present.

But there is not much to be said for Lestock. He also was a man of violent temper, to whom such treatment suggested a sullen revenge. He had served with credit under both Byng and Wager, but may perhaps have suffered, like others, by his West Indian service under Vernon. It was he who gallantly took the forts of Bocca Chica. It was he, on the other hand, who behaved in as arrogant a manner to the gallant Captain Barnett as Mathews now behaved to him.*

It seems also that, in addition to his other faults, he was a man of loose moral character.†

The relations between the two chiefs exhibited themselves on the very eve of the engagement. On February 10th, the two fleets having been manœuvring all day without engaging, the English anchored for the night in the Bay of Hiéres.

As soon as they came to an anchor, Vice-Admiral Lestock went on board the "Namur," Mathews' flag-ship, with a design to concert with the admiral on the proper measures for attacking the combined fleet with advantage. Admiral Mathews did not on this occasion treat Mr. Lestock with the respect due to his rank; for, on the vice-admiral asking him if he had any particular orders and instructions for him, he said, "No"; observed it was a cold night, and desired him to go on board his own ship again.‡

Probably there were faults on both sides; but it was exactly this want of concert that led to disaster. At

* Charnock's "Biog. Nav."

† Stanhope's "History of England," vol. iii. p. 323.

‡ Beatson's "Naval and Military Memoirs," vol. i. p. 197.

the court-martial it was much pressed by witnesses against Mathews that he held no Councils of War, and the questions of the court implied that he should have held them ; to which he replied that there was no occasion to do so. Now Councils of War have generally done more harm than good, and the admiral was technically right ; but the resolution, to take no one into his confidence, and to leave everything to the moment of battle, could never have been adopted by Mathews unless his judgment had been warped by the deadly feud which existed between him and Lestock.

The 10th also passed without an engagement. The winds were light, and though the combined fleet contrived to form a very fair line, partly no doubt owing to more favourable airs, the English were straggling about in all directions, and, when night came on, were four or five miles off the enemy. On the morning of the 11th the distance between the fleets was found to have increased ; so also was the distance between the divisions of the two fleets respectively ; the English line, if so it could be called, which was to windward, extending over something like nine miles, while the enemy's line, though less extended, covered about six miles. Both were standing to the southward with light easterly winds, the combined fleet closing up and making sail, while the rear division of the English, under Lestock, which was widely separated from the rest, never got up till the close of the day. It cannot be stated with certainty whether this took place through the admiral's signals not being wisely made, or through the influ-

ence of partial currents affecting, so near the shore, in such light winds, some of the scattered ships more than others, or whether, as Mathews asserted, through wilful negligence on the part of Lestock. Thus, as the day wore on, the question which presented itself to Mathews was whether he should let the hostile fleet escape, as he believed it certainly would if he shortened sail and waited for the vice-admiral, or engage him as soon as he could with whatever ships were at hand. In fact he fell into the trap which the wily De Court, who commanded the enemy's fleet, was setting for him. Observing the disorder of his opponents all through the previous manœuvres, and its culmination on the morning of the 11th, the French admiral used his advantage by drawing Mathews after him to such a distance that he was in a position to deal with only a portion of the English fleet. If he had not been hampered by the slower sailing of the Spaniards he would probably have succeeded in inflicting a defeat on that portion, led as it was by an admiral with courage, but without conduct. As Lestock proved at his court-martial that he made all sail, and did his best to come up, we must give him the benefit of the doubt; but it was unfortunate for his reputation. This was, however, only part of the charge which was laid at his door.

At 11.30 the admiral, himself leading the centre division of his fleet, having formed his van, under Rear-Admiral Rowley, into line ahead of him, crowding a press of sail in pursuit of the enemy, and disregarding the distance which separated his two divi-

sions from the third, made the signal to engage. This was repeated by Rowley, but not by Lestock, who had no enemy to engage anywhere near him. By one o'clock Rowley found himself abreast of the "Terrible," the flag-ship of De Court, who commanded the centre division ; while Mathews was abreast of the "Real," of 114 guns, bearing the flag of Don Juan Josef Navarro, the gallant Spanish admiral who commanded the rear. This division consisted exclusively of the Spanish ships, twelve in number.

The French van under Commodore Gabaret, consisting of eight ships, now forging well ahead, and out of fire from any of the English, Mathews, at 1.30, made up his mind that he had no chance of bringing the enemy to action unless he bore down at once upon him, and stopped his further progress. The favourable moment had arrived. He argued that as his two divisions were a match for those they had at last overtaken, he might hope that the remaining one would come up in time to assist him before the French van could be brought into effective operation. In this hope, which would not have been unreasonable with hearty commanders who understood their leader and were zealous for action, he found himself grievously disappointed. Not only did Lestock fail to appear in time to be of use in the earlier part of the battle, or to help him when he did arrive, but not more than half the captains of his own divisions were of any real service. Fortunately, though the difference of nationality did not turn out so fatal to the enemy as the jealousies amongst the English proved

to themselves, there was not much more cordiality between the French and Spaniards. Fortunately also the enemy lost the advantage they might have gained by help of their van, owing to the clever conduct of the three leading English ships, which kept their wind alongside of them, when the rest bore down out of line. Here, in order to understand Hawke's share in the action, we must give a list of the English ships and officers, according to their proper place in line of battle.

VAN: Rear-Admiral William Rowley.

Ships.	Guns.	
Stirling Castle	70	Captain Cooper.
Warwick	60	,, Temple West.
Nassau	70	,, James Lloyd.
Cambridge	80	,, Charles Drummond.
Barfleur (Admiral)	90	,, Merrick De L'Angle.
Princess Caroline	80	,, Henry Osborn.
Berwick	70	,, Edward Hawke.
Chichester	80	,, William Dilke.
Kingston	60	,, John Lovett.

CENTRE: Admiral Thomas Mathews.

Dragon	60	Captain Charles Watson.
Bedford	70	,, Hon. George Townshend.
Princesa	74	,, Robert Pett.
Norfolk	80	,, Hon. John Forbes.
Namur (Admiral)	90	,, John Russel.
Marlborough	90	,, James Cornewall.
Dorsetshire	80	,, George Burrish.
Essex	70	,, Richard Norris.
Rupert	60	,, John Ambrose.
Royal Oak	70	,, Edmund Williams.

REAR : Vice-Admiral Richard Lestock.

Ships.	Guns.		
Dunkirk	60	Captain	Charles Purvis.
Somerset	80	„	George Sclater.
Torbay	70	„	John Gascoigne.
Neptune (Admiral)	90	„	George Stepney.
Russell	80	„	Robert Long.
Buckingham	70	„	John Towry.
Boyne	80	„	Rowland Frogmere.
Elisabeth	70	„	Joshua Lingen.
Revenge	70	„	George Berkeley.

The moment of Mathews' attack was selected with judgment. The Spanish line had an immense gap in it; five ships being a long way astern of their admiral and of his two seconds, the "Constante" and "Santa Isabel." On these three ships Mathews gallantly bore down till within close fighting distance, supported with equal gallantry by Forbes in the "Norfolk" and Cornewall in the "Marlborough"; while the three leading ships of the Spanish division left their admiral to his fate, and held on with the French centre. The "Poder" alone remained, a ship exceptionally well manned and commanded; while the remaining English ships of Mathews' division, and two more which had strayed from the other divisions, nine in all, were so badly commanded that this one Spaniard held them all at bay. She had no great difficulty, it seems, in beating off the "Princesa" and "Somerset"; and the "Bedford," "Dragon," "Dorsetshire," "Essex," "Rupert," "Kingston," and "Royal Oak" amused themselves with firing ineffectual shots at her from too great a distance to penetrate, or pursued much the same course, when they thought they saw an opportunity, with the three Spanish ships which were locked

in deadly embrace with Mathews, Cornewall, and Forbes, or with the five lagging Spaniards who were out of the reach of shot. It is even said that in this random firing the "Somerset" received several shots from the "Kingston."

Of the three officers mentioned Forbes had the easiest task, as he soon drove the "Constante" out of the line, though at the cost of great damage to his own masts and rigging, as well as of several men killed and wounded. But the "Namur" and "Marlborough," receiving no assistance worth mention from any other ships, were left at the end of a close engagement, lasting some three hours, in as bad a state as their opponents. Not that they lost nearly so many men: for it is said that the Spanish admiral, who had nearly 2,000 soldiers and sailors on board, lost 500; but the "Marlborough" lost 171 men, killed and wounded, as well as her main and mizen masts, and the "Namur" was so badly damaged that Mathews shifted his flag, towards the evening, into the "Russell." The chief loss, however, sustained in the battle was that of the gallant Captain Cornewall, of the "Marlborough," the same officer who had been originally proposed as Anson's coadjutor in his expedition to the Pacific, and a Member of Parliament. Had he lived he might have become a great man.

Turning now our attention to the English van: when the Commander-in-Chief and his seconds bore down on the Spanish admiral, Rowley, supported by his second, Osborn of the "Princess Caroline," did the same by the French admiral, De Court, who commanded the centre of the combined fleet. His

task was in one respect a more difficult one than his chief's, for the Frenchman waited for him till he came close up, and then set all sail, drawing off to leeward, and coming to the wind again ; thus, without running away, avoiding with much dexterity the close action which he knew was what he had most to dread. However, he could not pursue these tactics very far, or he would have gone too much to leeward of the Spanish rear ; and thus Rowley and Osborn came up with him and his two seconds at last. After a close conflict of some two hours the two English ships, not without a considerable loss of men, obliged their three opponents to make off ; but they did not succeed in capturing one of them. Those were the only three ships of the French centre which were engaged ; as the rest kept their wind with a view of tacking and coming down upon Rowley, so as to place him between two fires. This was prevented by the independent action of the three leading ships of the English van, which, as has been said, disobeyed the signal to bear down and engage, and, keeping their wind, not only paralysed the enemy's van, but also the leading ships of his centre. For this their captains, Temple West, Cooper, and Lloyd, were tried by court-martial, and cashiered ; but within a year restored to their former rank. As they saved the fleet by their disobedience, this sentence was only one of the many anomalies of an extraordinary battle, and still more extraordinary series of courts-martial. As to the remaining ships of Rowley's division, the "Cambridge," "Chichester," and "Berwick," it is difficult to discover what service

was performed by the first, but her captain was not tried by court-martial, and was no doubt reasonably excused; Captain Dilke of the "Chichester" was tried and found guilty of not engaging sufficiently close; the "Berwick" remains.

Captain Hawke's station was towards the rear of the van, and his first opponent the Spanish "Neptuno,"* one of the ships which we have seen leaving the rear division and pushing forward into the centre. After about an hour's close engagement he drove her out of the line, with heavy loss. It seems she lost that day her captain, first lieutenant, four other officers, and 200 men; but she did not strike. This battle produced the effect of bringing the "Berwick" within no great distance of the "Poder," the ship which, we have seen, had beaten off the "Somerset" and the "Princesa," and kept several more of the centre division at bay. Hawke at once, with that rapid intuition which was his characteristic, made up his mind to put an end to such a disgraceful spectacle. Bearing down upon her within pistol, or "half-musket," shot, his first broadside killed 27 of her men and dismounted several of her lower-deck guns. In twenty minutes he had dismasted her; and at the end of a two hours' conflict at close quarters, during which the "Poder" lost 200 men killed and wounded,† the brave Spaniard struck his colours. It is said that, on the occurrence of this event, which cost the "Berwick" the loss of only five

* See the evidence of Mr. Cole, Master of the "Berwick," given at the court-martial on Mathews.

† Log of the "Berwick.

men wounded, more than one ship sent to take possession of the "Poder"; but the captain would deliver his sword to no one but the officer sent by the ship to which he had struck, pointing to the "Berwick," and saying at the same time that he held the others in the greatest contempt.* Lieutenant Lloyd was the officer sent by Hawke, with 22 men, to take possession; he was first lieutenant of the ship, and was examined on Mathews' court-martial. From his evidence we obtain some valuable information. It was about 4 p.m. when the "Poder" struck, and a good deal had happened, which must be noticed before we return to her, since the two admirals had borne down out of line.

The "Real" (or "Royal Philip") and the "Marlborough" were lying like wrecks on the water, and the "Namur" and "Norfolk" had become almost unmanageable from the damage incurred in their rigging. Mathews, finding he could not make the "Real" strike, and having drifted to some distance from her, now determined to set her on fire by means of the "Ann" fireship. All fleets carried with them two or three of these vessels, though they were but seldom used in the open sea. In this terrible emergency the Spanish admiral could only with great difficulty bring any guns to bear on the "Ann"; and she was coming down under full sail upon him. He was saved by a series of accidents. Some of his shot struck the vessel, and his launch approached so near as to cause the captain of the "Ann" to fire his guns at her. These set fire to the explosive

* Hervey's "Naval History," vol. iv. p. 250.

material, and the "Ann" blew up, with all who were still on board, before reaching the "Real." It came out at the court-martial that the officers of the fire-ship were "fuddled"; the admiral's orders to her were delayed till the opportunity was lost; every detail on board the vessel went wrong throughout; and the "Essex," which was particularly ordered to support her, did nothing of the sort.

The French admiral, if he did not gain the palm of valour, carried off by the Spanish admiral Navarro, who had received two wounds, now showed the skill of an able leader. In the midst of the rude assault of Rowley, he perceived the state of the "Real" and her consorts, and fearing that the British rear must by this time have come up, disengaged himself from Rowley and Osborn, made the signal for the fleet to tack,—the log of the "Berwick" says that they were—and quickly formed his ships into a good line of battle on the starboard tack. Rowley followed his example, and, collecting his own ships, rallied to the side of his admiral, who, in consequence of the five Spanish ships (which had been so far astern when the action began) having at last come up, was unable to pursue his advantage over the "Real" any further. Mathews now, therefore, finally collected both divisions round the crippled "Marlborough," standing on the opposite tack from the combined fleet, or, as Lestock described the manœuvre, running away from his enemy. Nothing more of importance was done that day. But where was Lestock? If two divisions of the fleet could, in spite of numerous defections, prove a match

for the whole of the enemy, something decisive might certainly have been expected from the three together. But no help came from the vice-admiral. There had been an error in Mathews' signals ; and though Lestock had arrived during the afternoon within fighting distance, he took advantage of the error not to fight at all, but to keep aloof. The signal for "engaging" had been made when that for "the line of battle" was still flying. Nothing but the above-mentioned feud could have so warped the judgment of a man, who had behaved well in previous battles, as to persuade him that he was doing his duty in obeying the literal construction of both signals while disregarding the evident spirit which dictated the last signal, the signal to engage. Nevertheless it was the letter of the law—the law that a battle must be fought in line—and a court-martial acquitted him !

To return to Hawke and his prize. The operations above described* had the effect of leaving them both well to leeward of the rest of the fleet, and boats were passing between them. Lloyd, on his way from the prize, was hailed by Admiral Rowley, who, with his division, was now standing to windward in order to join Mathews, and went on board. The admiral told Lloyd on the quarter-deck of the "Barfleur" that "he would do his endeavours to save the prize, and give Captain Hawke the honour of carrying her to Minorca ; that he had not been well acquainted

* In Clerk's "Naval Tactics" there is a plan of the battle which gives, on the whole, a fair general idea of it. It scarcely seems necessary to transfer it to these pages.

with Captain Hawke before, but he should now be very well acquainted with him from his behaviour." Before Lloyd could get to the "Berwick," which was also trying to rejoin the fleet, he had to pass near the prize—the February night was now closing in—and, to his horror, descried a French ship close to her. He immediately rowed back to Admiral Rowley, to report the fact. Rowley ordered him to go on board the "Berwick" instantly, and take his orders to Hawke to bear down again and drive off the French ship. This the "Berwick" did, and again rejoined the fleet. Lloyd now brought a boat's load of prisoners up from the prize, but not being able to overtake his own ship, put them on board the "Royal Oak" for the night, and rejoined the "Berwick" with them next day. When this officer, by that time a captain, gave his evidence, the court asked: "And did a large body of His Majesty's fleet run away from a division of the enemy's fleet, and leave them in possession of the only prize His Majesty's fleet had taken that day, and desert that ship which had distinguished itself by taking her?" Lloyd: "Our fleet stood from her, which obliged the 'Berwick' to follow them upon the French fleet's coming down on her."

It was now too late to get the fourth lieutenant of the "Berwick" and his seventeen men—(the master deposed to the number being twenty-two)—out of the "Poder," and the French fleet, finding themselves close to her, took possession of Hawke's prize, and made prisoners of the officer and men. Thus the one trophy of the day was gone; and we may imagine

the feelings of her captors. Not the least bitter part of the affair was that Mathews had ignored them altogether, and when the "Poder" was afterwards abandoned by the enemy, gave the orders for her destruction, not to Hawke, but to Captain Norris of the "Essex," who had behaved disgracefully from first to last. Again, such was his mismanagement, that when Rowley had ordered the "Diamond" frigate to lie by the prize, Mathews countermanded the order. The evidence showed she might have been saved if the directions of the former had been obeyed. This was far from a trifle. In such a balanced and confused action, one line-of-battle ship captured and retained would have refuted the boast of the enemy to have gained a victory; a claim they emphasised by making Admiral Navarro the Marquis de la Victoria. National vanity, however, is pardonable: but that the excellent historian, Ranke, should speak of this battle as a victory for the combined fleets is one of the few errors which can be detected in his "History of England."

Mathews having at last collected his fleet, worked to windward all night, the wind being still from the eastward; and in the morning appears to have been surprised to find the enemy far away, running to leeward, as fast as their shattered state would allow, and already at least a dozen miles off. This was bad management to begin with. The whole of the day was taken up in the pursuit: but the winds were light, and the distance was only lessened by about a half, while the enemy, hampered by the state of the "Real," which was towed by another ship, and still

more by the dismasted "Poder," were obliged to relinquish the latter, and tried to set her on fire. This, however, failed, and Norris of the "Essex," in pursuit of his orders, completed, when his ship came near enough, the combustion. She soon blew up. So passed the 12th.

Again the night was lost; but though the wind had freshened, and the enemy had made the utmost use of it, there was still one last chance. Lestock's division was nearest to the combined fleet, and when the day broke he reported that he had discovered it. He was ordered to chase, the rest followed. They were fast gaining on the enemy, who had still the "Real" in tow, when, to the equal astonishment of all alike, Spaniards, French, and English, Mathews, at 9 a.m. of the 13th, hoisted the signal for recall, and relinquished the pursuit.

This act crowned his series of blunders, and formed another charge against him. Lestock now had his revenge. He had done his best to overtake the flying foe, on the last day at least, and it was Mathews who stopped him at the moment when, with his division all fresh, for he had never been engaged, he had every prospect of success and distinction. It was no wonder that this proceeding should have been universally assigned as the direct consequence of the quarrel, and attributed to the admiral's jealousy of his vice-admiral; but on his defence, strange to say, the former had more to say for it than he had for his other blunders; and it is probable that, however mistaken, he did really feel his responsibility for the safety of Italy with which he was entrusted, more

than anything else. The freshening east wind was driving both fleets fast towards the mouth of the Straits of Gibraltar, and he might not be able to get back to his station for weeks ; he had information that the Spaniards were prepared to take advantage of his absence ; and as—so little was there of the true English admiral about him—he did not expect to effect more by a battle than to take the "Real," he considered that the Italian question ruled the situation. This was his only excuse.

That we may not have to return to this inefficient officer, it may be remarked here that he certainly was far from having fair play at his court-martial, which did not take place till nearly two years afterwards. During a part of this time, having speedily got rid of his obnoxious vice-admiral by sending him home under arrest, he managed his duties in Italy with considerable success. But Lestock's political friends soon came to the head of affairs ; and, to the astonishment of the world, he got off ; only, however, to fail finally at the expedition to L'Orient in 1746, with the naval part of which he was intrusted. When Mathews' turn came to be tried, not only were the witnesses allowed to hear each other's evidence, so that one copied from another, while the Judge Advocate most improperly tampered with the evidence ; but, if we may believe Horace Walpole (who gives no proof of such an incredible statement), the members of the court were changed if they showed any sympathy with the accused. The sentences of the two courts were indeed surprising. The man who fought as hard as he could at close quarters with the enemy

was cashiered, and rendered incapable of further employment. The man who kept out of action was acquitted. Campbell, in his "Lives of the Admirals," which, though a standard book, is full of prejudice and inaccuracies, sums up the verdict of the country at the time, and of most historians since, by the remark that, "Mathews might want head: Lestock certainly wanted heart. The one might deserve censure; the other ought to have been shot. The sentences of the court-martial must for ever remain a blot on the annals of the country."*

Nevertheless, after a careful survey of the whole of the evidence in this, which is, perhaps, the most voluminous and tedious series of courts-martial in the history of any nation, it may be admissible to demur to the above judgment. Some allowance should be made for both chiefs, obliged to use codes of signals so imperfect as to suggest error; and the greatest blame attaches to the Admiralty for employing in high command men who were decidedly unfitted for it, still more for employing them together when aware of the impossibility of their cordial co-operation. Mathews should have been shelved on the Superannuated List; but surely he ought not to have been cashiered. Lestock should have been placed in exactly the same position. Neither could command his own temper, and therefore they should never have been suffered again to command fleets.

Perhaps the mistakes of Mathews were exhibited as much in his conduct towards his captains as in his

* Vol. iv. p. 50.

general management of the fleet. Venting all his wrath on his personal enemy, he took no steps to bring the captains who had so shamefully misbehaved to a court-martial. Neither, it must be said, did the Admiralty. This the country, speaking through its representatives in Parliament, did for them both. The House of Commons demanded that the two admirals, and six of the captains, should be put on their trial; and the Admiralty, waking up, added five more of the latter to the list. Of these, Captains Frogmere of the "Boyne" died on his passage home; Captain Richard Norris, of the "Essex," accused by his own officers, resigned his command, and deserted; two were acquitted, Captains Pett of the "Princesa" and Sclater of the "Somerset"; three, as we have, seen were (unjustly) cashiered, but restored; Captain Williams of the "Royal Oak," and Captain Dilke of the "Chichester," were dismissed their ships, but afterwards restored and placed on half-pay; Captain Ambrose of the "Rupert" was cashiered, and mulcted of a year's pay, but eventually restored; and Captain Burrish, Hawke's late senior in command, was cashiered and rendered incapable of further employment.

The reader may enquire why, even though he has been required to follow a detailed account of the battle, he should be expected to take an interest in these courts-martial. Almost any sketch of Hawke's career which he may take up will supply an answer. He will find successive compilers copying from one another the absolute error that Hawke, though he was the only captain to take a ship, was tried by

court-martial for breaking the line, broke, and immediately reinstated. In an exceedingly brief notice of the admiral which appears in the recent edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, this statement occupies a large part of the space allotted. It probably first appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1760. Here Hawke is said to have been "broke for his bravery and restored by the King"; and later authors may well have supposed that, as he lived without contradicting it for twenty years after the statement occurred, no doubt could attach to it. But such matters were quite out of our admiral's way; and the story may be disposed of henceforward. Those just mentioned were the only officers accused or tried. Within a few weeks after the battle, Hawke was placed in command of a squadron of line-of-battle ships on delicate service in the Mediterranean. Charnock, towards the end of the last century, was, perhaps, the first to throw discredit on the story; but even he was staggered by the absence of any subsequent information about Hawke till, in 1747, he became an admiral. That blank we shall be able to fill up.

A few further words must be said about one of the officers already noticed, Captain Richard Norris, of the "Essex," since his connection with Hawke's prize brings us to the concluding notice of our hero in relation to the battle off Toulon.

Norris shared with John Byng the disadvantage of being sons of the two great officers of their time. Under the auspices of his father, Norris early arrived at rank; whereas his disgraceful personal conduct in

the battle just described, according to the evidence of all his officers, showed that he ought never to have been allowed to go to sea at all. Disastrously for himself, Admiral Rowley, out of regard no doubt to the father (who this very year was placed in command of the Channel fleet to protect England from invasion), received the unfortunate man, who had resigned his command, on board his own flag-ship as a volunteer on half-pay. Norris begged to be tried by court-martial, but Rowley declined, on the ground that a half-pay officer could not be tried; and when the Admiralty, incited to vigorous action by pressure from the House of Commons, insisted on a trial, they complained to the Lords Justices that Rowley did not properly instruct the court-martial when it was held, but exhibited the strongest marks of partiality, never even confining the accused officer, who was charged with cowardice and disobedience; and this at a time "when the discipline of the navy is already too much relaxed." The Lords of the Admiralty therefore beg the Lords Justices (the King being in Hanover) to recall the admiral, who had been in command of the Mediterranean fleet since Mathews had been ordered home for trial. Rowley now at last sent Norris to England. He deserted at Gibraltar on the voyage, changed his name, and was never more heard of; but his friend the admiral was superseded, and never again employed at sea. Thus ended, though he became a Lord of the Admiralty, and succeeded to honorary posts, the promising career of a good officer, who was one of the few who did his duty in the battle, and who had subsequently com-

manded the fleet for a year with high reputation.* The following letter to Admiral Mathews, from the Letter-book in possession of the Hawke family, will sufficiently explain the later transactions in relation to the "Poder," as far as Norris was concerned :—

SIR, "BERWICK," at Sea, 24th February, 1743.†

I intreat the liberty of intruding a little upon your time to acquaint you that I sent one of my officers to Captain Norris to demand the colours and things which he and his officers have taken out of the "Poder," the Spanish man-of-war we took ; and his answer was that he could not deliver them unless it was by your orders. I beg leave to say, sir, that it is not a little hard upon myself and my officers that we should be deprived of these things who had the justest right and title to them. And as I was not conscious to myself that I had done anything to offend you, at least I am sure not designedly, I flattered myself with the hopes that I should have had the honour to have burnt her, as well as to have taken her, but the hurry you was in might very possibly not give you time to think of it. I am therefore to beg that you will do me the justice to order Captain Norris and his officers to restore the things that they have taken, and the colours which he has in his possession, which I am convinced he cannot lay the least claim to. However, sir, I submit this to your will and pleasure, as I shall be glad to do everything which relates to me while I have the honour to be under you command.

Hawke concludes with an account of the circumstances under which he had been obliged to leave the "Poder," substantially the same as that already given from Lloyd's evidence. Whether he obtained the

* See Letters from the Admiralty to the Lords Justices, May 29th, 1745 ; Record Office.

† Or 13th February 174$\frac{3}{4}$. Hawke was writing in the Mediterranean, where the New Style was already observed.

colours does not appear; but this behaviour on the part of the admiral may either be the cause or effect of the extraordinary fact that the "Poder" is only mentioned in Mathews' despatch as "a ship of Navarre, of 66 guns, which was obliged to surrender; and that out of 900 men, only the captain and 200 were saved, when she was ordered to be burnt": then, without noticing who captured her, the "Gazette" goes on to say, "Captain Hawke of the 'Berwick' left her, but could not get his lieutenant and twenty-three men out of her; his first lieutenant having done all he could to persuade the men to quit her, but in vain."

No doubt the completeness of Hawke's success contrasted unfavourably with his own failure; but this gross misrepresentation on the part of Mathews —for its suppression of the truth amounts to that—is unpardonable; and it is connected with an evident desire to procure some credit for Norris, whose misconduct he had not only perceived, but reprimanded during the battle. There cannot be the least doubt that he ought to have punished the man instead of rewarding him. There were in fact six officers who had distinguished themselves in command, Mathews, Rowley, Cornewall, Forbes, Osborne, and Hawke; but the last was the only one of the six who so fought his ship as to cause his opponent to strike; and this was his reward.

From the date of this battle till the close of the year 1745, Hawke was for the most part employed in command of large squadrons under Admiral Rowley With seven line-of-battle ships under his command,

we find him cruising in the Straits of Gibraltar and on the coast of Italy. In October, 1744, he rejoins the admiral. In December he is detached with another squadron to watch the French fleet at Cadiz ; and, in January of the next year, to act against French and Spanish troops on the Genoese coast. There is nothing worth noting in the mass of correspondence connected with this period, but it may be remarked that Hawke's letters to his captains are uniformly kind, courteous, and thoughtful; and that those to his admiral show an extreme care to avoid giving offence, even when he has to explain that he has had orders which it was impossible to carry into effect. They are generally well expressed, and always the letters of a gentleman. At the end of September he finds himself once more at Plymouth, having brought home Rowley's flagship, the "Neptune," with a convoy, in a state which he describes as "foul and very leaky," and he is soon afterwards paid off. For about a year Hawke is once more on shore ; and as his uncle had just died, it was now, probably, that he settled at Swathling.

By way of contrast to the favourable impression Hawke had now created, it may be noticed that it was in this very year, 1746, that Commodore Peyton and his squadron "disappeared" after his indecisive combat in the East Indies with Labourdonnais ; that Lestock made his final failure at L'Orient ; and that Commodore Mitchell behaved in the West Indies much as Peyton had behaved in the East. Mitchell was broke: Peyton died just before the court-martial ordered to be held upon him. It was tolerably plain

that the country had not yet, during the first seven years of the war, found the men it wanted for the command of fleets. But the dross was now nearly purged away, and there was plenty of true metal at bottom. Unsatisfactory as the naval service had proved itself in the late battle, some fine single actions had been fought, and it had already inflicted twice the amount of damage on the enemy's commerce that they had on the English. The final discomfiture of the Jacobites had also given a sense of security and hope to the nation of which it did not as yet measure the importance. It was ready for further sacrifices, and had not much longer to wait for results. Seven years had been, however, a long time to wait.

CHAPTER IV.

HAWKE'S BATTLE WITH THE FRENCH OFF USHANT IN 1747.

THE great improvement in naval affairs which commenced from the year 1747 must be attributed, in the first place, to Lord Anson. This excellent officer, though only eight years older than the subject of our memoir, had, in consequence of having been fortunate enough to serve as a lieutenant in Sir George Byng's action, come much earlier into notice. He thus, in addition to his seniority by age, gained three years more upon Hawke in the race for the rank of post-captain. When the war broke out he was a captain of considerable standing, and it was creditable to the authorities that they had discovered his merits, and selected him for the expedition to the Pacific which was to make him famous for all time. Like Hawke, he came of a family in the position of gentlemen, and something more, since they both inherited brains which had been strengthened by training in the ranks of the bar. When he came home in 1744 his great reputation for ability as well as courage naturally pointed him out as the man most fitted for the reorganisation of the naval service. He was of mature age, had

gained a vast experience, and the great fortune he had made on his expedition rendered him independent. In less that four years from his becoming a Junior Lord of the Admiralty, he had made himself so necessary to the Duke of Bedford, and to Lord Sandwich, the next in rank to the Duke, that he became the virtual head of the Board, over which he soon afterwards presided as First Lord, with one short interval, till the time of his death.

Anson's experience suggested the system, which soon grew to be habitual, of collecting the scattered squadrons which had hitherto cruised upon the French trade, and forming them into larger bodies, capable of overpowering the French squadrons sent from Brest and other ports to convoy fleets of merchant ships to their colonies in the East and West Indies. It was just at this period that, finding all attempts at invading England, exciting rebellion, and commanding the Mediterranean, had completely failed, the French were directing all their attention to the new project of founding, by the help, as far as possible, of Spain, a great colonial empire. But the efforts which they steadily pursued from this time forward, till Pitt destroyed all their hopes, had an unfortunate commencement.

Presuming upon the negligence of the British Admiralty, the French Government equipped two small squadrons for the above purpose. These, under the command of M. de la Jonquière, who was to attempt the recapture of Cape Breton (lately taken from the French by the American colonists, assisted by Captain Peter Warren), and of M. de St. George,

who was to assist Dupleix in India, were to keep company till out of reach of British cruisers. Anson had, however, himself embarked in command of a squadron, more than twice as large as both those of the French put together. Nothing could have been better planned. The French were caught, just where they were expected, off Cape Finisterre; and the whole of their ships, though after a resistance which was most honourable for so weak a force, were captured. Almost all the actual fighting fell to the share of the second in command, Peter Warren, lately made an admiral, and to the Captains Boscawen, Denis, Grenville, Brett, Saumarez, Hanway, and Montagu. Temple West, who has been noticed in the last chapter, was Warren's flag-captain.

Here indeed was a behaviour very different from what was observed in 1744; and here we make our first acquaintance with some of Hawke's most gallant contemporaries. Warren and Boscawen will alone, however, require any special notice. The others were fine, dashing officers, but took up no great position. Grenville, who seems to have inherited the talents of his family, was killed in this battle. Anson speaks of him as "by much the cleverest officer I ever saw."* "Mad Montagu," Lord Sandwich's brother, exhibited on this occasion a timely madness, very near akin to heroism. Peircy Brett, Anson's old first lieutenant in the "Centurion," had already destroyed the prospects of the young Pretender by his brave action with the "Elizabeth" in 1745, and lived to be a Lord

* "Bedford Correspondence," vol. i. p. 214.

of the Admiralty. Saumarez, another of Anson's school—for it was one of the marks of that lord's ability that he distinctly formed a body of fine officers out of those who had shared his voyage round the world—survived this battle but to die on the quarter-deck of his ship, in a few months, under Hawke's command. Denis, another of the school, gallantly fought in command of his chief's old ship, the "Centurion," and of him we shall hear again.

Boscawen is the officer who, of all who rose to fame in this period, ran the nearest race for glory with Hawke. As it will be more convenient to sketch his career when we have made further progress in tracing that of Hawke, it will be sufficient to state that no ship contributed more to Anson's victory than the "Namur," which Boscawen commanded, unless we except the "Devonshire," which carried Warren's flag, and that admits of doubt. The last-named officer had the honour of capturing M. de la Jonquière's own ship, the "Sérieux," and soon afterwards, with the help of Montagu, that of the other commodore, St. George, which had, however, been already roughly handled by Boscawen. And here, as Warren was soon to have the opportunity of lifting Hawke to fame, he must engage our attention. He received for this battle the Knighthood of the Bath, as a pendant to Anson's peerage, and we may therefore speak of him as "Sir Peter Warren."

Of Irish extraction, this officer, who is now forgotten, except by those who have remarked Roubiliac's fine monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey, seems to have had many qualifications for

taking a place in history, but to have lost opportunities enjoyed by others through the ill-health which he had contracted during long service in the West Indies. A little senior to Hawke, he had had the good fortune to be in command of a small squadron off Martinique which took such rich prizes that, having afterwards added to these some other valuable captures on the home station, he was said to be one of the wealthiest naval officers of the day. Horace Walpole* called him "richer than Anson, and as absurd as Vernon," referring to his speeches in the House of Commons; but we are not bound to accept all Walpole's *obiter dicta.*

In 1745 Warren commanded the naval forces which, assisted by the colonists, took Louisbourg, the capital of the island of Cape Breton, and the centre round which the conflict for western empire raged till Boscawen finally retook it in 1758. This also had added to his wealth. Here he showed both courage and conduct, as indeed he did most signally in Anson's battle. The decision taken on that occasion by Anson to disregard the old tactics of waiting to form the line, and to order a general chase of the enemy, was suggested by Warren, who—

> suspecting that the enemy's design was only to gain time, and that as soon as the ships they convoyed had got to a considerable distance they would make off and endeavour to escape under favour of the night, bore down to the vice-admiral and told him his suspicions, advising him to haul down the signal for the line, and to hoist one for a general chase.†

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* "Letters to Mann," vol. i. p. 283.

† Beatson's "Naval and Military Memoirs," vol. i. p. 357.

It was then natural that Anson, who had formed an early friendship with Warren on the American Station, should obtain for him the succession to himself in command of the fleet, which command he had relinquished when he received his peerage and resumed his place at the Admiralty. Sir Peter hoisted his flag in the "Devonshire," taking over the charge of the fleet on July 20th, 1747.

When Anson, on April 9th, 1747, had sailed from Plymouth with his band of heroes on the successful cruise just mentioned, he had left behind at that port an officer who fretted not a little at being excluded from the number. It seemed as if none but the admiral's immediate friends were to have a chance of distinction; and indeed this was a fault very commonly found with Lord Anson. Hawke had been appointed to the command of the "Mars," then in dock, and was employed in the tedious task of superintending her repairs. The first letter of his which occurs since he acknowledged the summons of the Admiralty to attend Mathews' court-martial is dated April 24, 1746, and conveys a request that, as he can be of no use at Plymouth looking after the "Mars" till she is finished, he may be allowed to go "to his house in Hampshire." This request is refused. But very soon afterwards all such difficulties came to an end, and we find our captain included in the list of promotions to the rank of admiral, the first promotions which had been made for three years, and the first occasion on which the modern system of promoting to a retired list of admirals was brought into operation. Up to this time the method of

selection, necessary in some form for the higher commands, had worked most unjustly. The captains who had been passed over never moved up to any higher rank; and the greatest inequalities and hardships had consequently prevailed. This, like many other reforms, must be placed to Anson's credit.*

It was probably due to the delay of promotions that had occurred, and to the want of admirals of different grades for immediate employment, that Hawke was made, as it would seem, Rear-Admiral of the White at once, without passing through the previous grade. His commission, like those of Knowles, Forbes, Boscawen,† and the rest, was dated July 15th, 1747; as also was the advancement of Sir Peter Warren to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the White. On July 20th, Warren was appointed to the command of the "Western Squadron"; two days afterwards, Hawke hoisted his flag on board the "Gloucester." On August 8th, Warren informs him that he is to place himself under his command. Next day Hawke sailed from Plymouth; and on August 20th he writes from the "Windsor" "at sea."

The above dates have been given in order to

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* Barrow's "Life of Anson," p. 143.

† Ekins attributes to the generous advocacy of Boscawen some share in Hawke's promotion. But there is no reason for doubting the story that it was the King who, when the list of captains for promotion to the rank of admiral was submitted to him, finding that Boscawen, Hawke's junior, was selected, and not Hawke, personally insisted that the list should include him. George II. had never forgotten his conduct in the battle off Toulon, and is said to have called him his "own captain."

explain Hawke's position at this time. Anson's intention was to employ both these admirals in the execution of his new plans, one of which had just proved, under himself, so successful. Warren he was sure he could trust, and he had formed a high opinion of Hawke.

The actual form of Hawke's employment was suggested by Warren himself, under whom Hawke had once served, and grew out of his own state of health. He was suffering from a "scorbutic disorder." In a letter to the Admiralty, dated August 3rd, 1747, he writes thus :—

I should be extremely obliged to their Lordships if the present service at sea does not require the attendance of more than one admiral, they would be pleased to join Admiral Hawke, now here with me, in the command, who, I dare venture to say, will not be displeased with it, and may sail, if their Lordships shall think proper, on the return of the express that carries this, with the "Monmouth," "Windsor," "Eagle," and "Amazon" to join (for this cruise) Captain [Harry] Norris, or the senior officer of the squadron in the Bay, by which time I shall hope to re-establish my health so well as to be able to relieve, or act in conjunction with, Mr. Hawke in the next [cruise], which will probably be of greater consequence than the present by the expected return of the galleons, who make it a general rule to come home late in the fall or winter.

Anson, it would seem, hesitated: for, on August 7th, Warren writes again :—

I observe what you say about the ships abroad being under so young an officer. I am and have been uneasy about it, though I hope he will do well, and it could not then be avoided. Harrison will soon be there, who is a good man and an elder officer, if Mr. Hawke should not be put under my command; which from your letter I have so little reason to doubt that I

have his instructions all ready ; and he is prepared to go at a moment's notice.

On August 20th Hawke ends his letter to Warren, in which he reports proceedings, by saying :—

I flatter myself you will do me the justice to believe that I have nothing so much at heart as the faithful discharge of my duty, and in such manner as will give satisfaction both to the Lords of the Admiralty and yourself. This shall ever be my utmost ambition, and no lucre of profit or other views shall induce me to act otherwise.

These words suggest a hint, which subsequent letters illustrate, that although the junior admiral was bent on satisfying the senior if possible, he intended to act on his own responsibility, and that he did not share his chief's anxiety about the galleons. He was thinking a great deal more about meeting the enemy's men-of-war. There could hardly be a more delicate position, but it did not last long. It may here be observed, as we shall often come across the fact, that the circumstances of victualling, cleaning, and repairing ships in those days necessitated the employment of a much larger number on any cruising service than the most careful and skilful admiral could expect to bring into action, on the day of battle. There were no less than twenty-five line-of-battle ships in this "Western Squadron," and nineteen of them were handed over to Hawke ; yet he had only fourteen with him in his battle of October 14th.

Warren's illness increased so much that he was obliged to ask the Admiralty to relieve him altogether from the command for a time, and substitute Hawke in his place. "I am unable to continue in

command of the Western Squadron by a violent flux, in addition to my former disorder." This letter is dated September 5th; and on September 8th, the Admiralty issue orders to Hawke to take the independent command which Sir Peter Warren had obtained temporary leave to resign. In addition to the nineteen large ships now formally placed under his orders, five however of which were only of fifty guns, seven frigates and two fire-ships are attached to his squadron. He is to cruise between Ushant and Cape Finisterre, twenty leagues to the westward of each cape; to make the land of Ushant every fortnight; and to station one of his best sailing ships and frigates off each cape to communicate with the Admiralty.

No intimation to this effect, however, reached Hawke for nearly a month. He still supposed himself to be acting under Warren, and had not even orders to make separate reports to the Admiralty. He was joined by the rest of Sir Peter's ships under Captain Fox's command on September 26th, and received his orders through him. After studying the despatches, he considers it his first duty to use his utmost endeavours to intercept the French convoy bound out from Rochelle; and therefore, he says, in acknowledging a letter from the Admiralty, dated August 28th (in which he had been ordered to make direct reports to their Secretary, independently of those to Warren), he means to keep all his ships together, "as it is of material consequence to the nation that we should be a full match for the enemy in case of meeting with them."

His letter of October 6th to Sir Peter Warren, contains the following passage:—

With respect to the intelligence you sent me relative to the galleons, as it is uncertain when they will come home, and likewise impossible for me to divide my force in the present necessitous condition of the ships under my command, I must lay aside all thoughts of them during this cruise, which cannot be of long continuance. And indeed, if I may presume to give my opinion, I should think sixty or seventy leagues to the westward of Cales would be the best place to look out for them; in which case a squadron must go out from England directly thither, well watered and victualled. For by the uncertainty of weather and the negligence of the agent-victualler, I find the ships that join me are so far from being in a condition to go on distant or different expeditions that it is with difficulty I can keep them any reasonable time with me. . . . You will perceive by the "state and condition" of the ships that I shall not be able to stay out past the month of October. . . . I am in great hopes that the station I am going to will throw us in the way of the enemy, either outward or homeward bound. With regard to lying in wait for them, all that any man can do is to put the most reasonable supposition in practice, and that I hope you will think I have done.

I wish with all my heart this may find you perfectly recovered and in a good state of health, and that I may be so happy as to obey all your commands in the way you would have me. I don't know that anything would give me more pleasure. I am always, with the greatest truth and respect, Sir, yours, &c.,

EDWARD HAWKE.

These letters are dated from the "Devonshire," Warren's flagship, of 66 guns, of which Captain Moore was now flag-captain, she having been sent to join Hawke with the rest of Warren's ships. Few of the letters of this date are without some special allusion to the unwholesome and "stinking" state of

the beer with which his ships had been supplied ; and as we find it of still more dangerous consequence to the service in the later cruises of the Seven Years' War, it may be presumed to have been a chronic state of things.

Between October 6th and October 12th the Admiralty despatches of September 8th, conferring the independent command, must have reached him, since the letters to Sir Peter Warren are now only sent as a matter of courtesy, while the first reports go to the Admiralty direct. On October 12th he informs the latter that "the situation we are now in seems very well calculated for intercepting both the eastward and homeward-bound trade of the enemy. I shall do everything in my power to keep the ships out with me as long as possible, and intend staying out myself while I can keep any number of them together."

On October 14th all these anxious considerations came to the end most desired by the admiral. He was now rewarded for having refused all temptations to cruise for galleons, or to detach portions of his fleet on that service. His despatch, or rather the greatest part of it, describing the battle of that day, has been printed more than once, on the ground that no other account of it could be half so good. The same reason applies in the present case ; but it will here be given in full. And indeed, throughout this book, the same plan, at the risk of a certain necessary stiffness inherent in official correspondence, will be pursued. It is a career worth studying in the admiral's own simple words.

Let us premise that the English fleet, on October

14th, consisted of the following fourteen ships—that of the French, under Admiral L'Etenduère, of the following nine :—

English.

Ships.	Guns.		
Devonshire (admiral)	66	Captain	John Moore.
Kent	64	„	Thomas Fox.
Edinburgh	70	„	Thomas Cotes.
Yarmouth	64	„	Charles Saunders.
Monmouth	70	„	Henry Harrison.
Princess Louisa	60	„	Charles Watson.
Windsor	60	„	Thomas Hanway.
Lion	60	„	Arthur Scott.
Tilbury	60	„	Robert Harland.
Nottingham	60	„	Philip Saumarez.
Defiance	60	„	John Bentley.
Eagle	60	„	George Brydges Rodney.
Gloucester	50	„	Philip Durell.
Portland	50	„	Charles Stevens.

French.

Le Tonnant (Chef d'Escadre, M. de L'Etenduère).	80	Captain	M. Duchaffault.
L'Intrepide	74	„	Comte de Vaudreuil.
Le Terrible	74	„	Comte Duguay.
Le Monarque	74	„	M. de la Bédoyère.
Le Neptune	70	„	M. de Fromentière (killed).
Le Trident	64	„	M. D'Amblimont.
Le Fougueux	64	„	M. Duvignault.
Le Severn	50	„	M. Durouret.
Le Content	60		(With the convoy).

"DEVONSHIRE," at Sea,

SIR, October 17th, 1747.

At seven in the morning of the 14th of October, being in the latitude of 37° 49′ N. longitude from Cape Finisterre 10 2′ W., the Cape bearing S. by E. 94 leagues, the "Edinburgh" made the signal for seven sail on the south-east quarter. I immediately made the signal for all the fleet to chase. About 8 a.m. saw a great number of ships, but so crowded together that we could not count them. About 10 made the signal for the line of battle ahead. The "Louisa," being the headmost and weathermost ship, made the signal for discovering eleven sail of the enemy's line-of-battle ships. Half an hour after Captain Fox, in the "Kent," hailed us and said they counted twelve very large ships. Soon after I perceived the enemy's convoy to crowd away with all the sail they could set, while their ships of war were endeavouring to form in a line astern of them, and hauled near the wind, under their topsails and foresails, and some with top-gallant-sails set. Finding we lost time in forming our line, while the enemy was standing away from us, at 11 made the signal for the whole squadron to chase. Half an hour after, observing our headmost ships to be within a proper distance, I made the signal to engage, which was immediately obeyed. The "Lion" and "Princess Louisa" began the engagement, and were followed by the rest of the squadron as they could come up, and went from rear to van. The enemy having the weather-gage of us, and a smart and constant fire being kept on both sides, the smoke prevented my seeing the number of the enemy, or what happened on either side for some time, In passing on to the first ship we could get near, we received many fires at a distance, till we came close to the "Severn" of 50 guns, which we soon silenced, and left to be taken up by the frigates astern. Then perceiving the "Eagle" and "Edinburgh" (who had lost her foretopmast) engaged, we kept our wind as close as possible in order to assist them. This attempt of ours was frustrated by the "Eagle's" falling twice on board us, having had her wheel shot to pieces, and all the men at it killed, and all her braces and bowlines gone. This drove us to

leeward, and prevented our attacking "Le Monarque" of 74, and the "Tonnant" of 80 guns, within any distance to do execution. However, we attempted both, especially the latter. While we were engaged with her, the breechings of all our lower-deck guns broke, and the guns flew fore and aft, which obliged us to shoot ahead, for our upper and quarter-deck guns could not reach her. Captain Harland, in the "Tilbury," observing that she fired single guns at us in order to dismast us, stood on the other tack, between her and the "Devonshire," and gave her a very smart fire. By the time the new breechings were all seized, I was got almost alongside the "Trident" of 64 guns, whom I engaged as soon as possible, and silenced by as brisk a fire as I could make. Just before I attacked her, observing the "Kent," which seemed to have little or no damage, at some distance astern of the "Tonnant," I flung out Captain Fox's pendant to make sail ahead to engage her, as I saw it was in his power to get close up with her, she being somewhat disabled, having lost her main and mizen topmasts. Seeing some of our ships at that time not so closely engaged as I could have wished, and not being well able to distinguish who they were, I flung out the signal for coming to a closer engagement. Soon after, I got alongside, within musket shot of the "Terrible," of 74 guns and 700 men. Near 7 at night she called out for quarter.

Thus far I have been particular with regard to the share the "Devonshire" bore in the action of that day. As to the other ships, as far as fell within my notice, their commanders, officers, and companies, behaved with the greatest spirit and resolution, in every respect like Englishmen. Only I am sorry to acquaint their Lordships that I must except Captain Fox, whose conduct on that day I beg they would give directions for inquiring into at a court-martial.

Having observed that six of the enemy's ships had struck, and it being very dark, and our own ships dispersed, I thought it best to bring-to for that night; and seeing a great firing a long way astern of me, I was in hopes to have seen more of the enemy's ships taken in the morning; but instead of that, I received the melancholy account of Captain Saumarez being

killed, and that the "Tonnant" had escaped in the night by the assistance of the "Intrepide," which by having the wind of our ships, had received no damage that I could perceive. Immediately I called a Council of War, a copy of which I send you enclosed.

As to the French convoys escaping, it was not possible for me to detach any ships after them at first, or during the action, except the frigates, and that, I thought, would have been imprudent, as I observed several large ships of war among them; and to confirm me in this opinion, I have since learned that they had the "Content," of 64 guns, and many frigates from 36 guns downwards. However, I took a step which seemed to me the most probable to intercept them; for as soon as I could man and victual the "Weazle" sloop, I detached her with an express to Commodore Legge (Leeward Islands).

As the enemy's ships were large, except the "Severn," they took a great deal of drubbing, and lost all their masts, excepting two, who had their foremasts left. This has obliged me to lay-by these two days past, in order to put them into a condition to be brought into port, as well as our own which have suffered greatly.

Their Lordships, I hope, will excuse me for not sending them by this opportunity the State and Condition of our ships, as I have not yet been able to collect them, every ship being so much employed.

I propose sending as many ships into Plymouth as I can spare, exclusive of a sufficient number to carry the prizes into Portsmouth. We have taken "Le Monarque," 74; "Le Terrible," 74; "Le Neptune," 74; "Le Trident," 64; "Le Fougueux," 64; "Severn," 50. Captain Stanhope sent his boats and took up numbers of pacquets thrown into the sea from the "Severn" and "Fougueux." I could not spare time to get them translated; besides they were too wet to be handled. I hope you will get some important intelligence from them, as I have, —that six ships of war are fitting at Brest for the East Indies.

I have sent this express by Captain Moore of the "Devonshire," in the "Hector"; and it would be doing great injustice

to merit not to say that he signalised himself greatly in the action.

This despatch was accompanied by a letter more specially recommending Captain, afterwards Sir John, Moore, and by another of the same date to Sir Peter Warren.

If I had not had the misfortune of having my right hand and side of my face burnt with powder, I should not have made use of an amanuensis, but given you a full detail of our action on the 14th. For though your bad state of health has obliged you to resign the command of the squadron, yet the many great obligations I lie under induces me to send you enclosed the most material parts of my letter to the Lords of the Admiralty. Wishing you a speedy recovery, I am, &c.,

EDWARD HAWKE.

To this may be appended the letter to Commodore Legge, mentioned in the despatch, and written the day after the battle.

Yesterday I fell in with a fleet of French ships of war, with a convoy of about three hundred sail bound to Martinico. I have taken the ships named in the margin [as above], and for particulars refer you to Captain Midwinter. While I was engaged, and by favour of the night, the convoy escaped, led off by a 64-gun ship and a few small frigates ; and this morning I find all my ships in so shattered a condition that I cannot pursue them. This intelligence I have thought proper to send you express by Captain Midwinter in order that you may use your endeavours to intercept them. I have likewise intelligence of six sail of French ships of war which are to sail with a convoy for France on the arrival of this at Martinico. Wishing you repeated acquisition of reputation and fortune, I am, with real regard, Sir, yours, &c.,

EDWARD HAWKE.

This prompt action with regard to the convoy was

rewarded with great success. Midwinter was ordered to "proceed without speaking with anything, or suffering yourself (if possible) to be spoke with on your passage." He was too late to tell Legge, for he was just dead; but he fortunately fell in with Pocock, who had taken his place; and a very large number of the ships were captured by his squadron.

Before proceeding to notice the two matters in Hawke's despatch which require attention, viz., the Council of War and the affair of Captain Fox, a few more facts regarding the battle should find a place here.

Besides the flagship, those which distinguished themselves were commanded by Captains Scott, Harland, Cotes, Watson, Saunders, Saumarez, Hanway, and Rodney; and of these the highest honour was won by Harland, who was particularly mentioned by Hawke, and of whom we hear again in Keppel's action; by Watson, who had been so distinguished in Anson's battle, and who, when admiral in the East Indies, covered himself with glory; by Saunders, who forced the "Neptune" to strike after a very close action of two hours; by Saumarez, Anson's gallant *protégé*, who was killed in the attack upon the "Tonnant," and whose monument is in Westminster Abbey; and by the immortal Rodney, who earned his first laurels in this battle, where the "Eagle" attacked ship after ship. But it is especially observable that the admiral not only omitted nothing which was required to prove him to be a first-rate Commander-in-Chief, but that the personal part he took in the fighting, where all had

an equal chance, was by far the greatest. It was like the lion's share of the danger which an ancient leader of chivalry, a Percy or a Talbot, a Douglas or a Bruce, or an Edward the First or Third, or the Black Prince, loved to seize for his own, and of which he would let no one rob him. Out of the six ships captured, Hawke, in the "Devonshire," a heavy ship indeed, but mounting only 66 guns took the "Severn" of 50 and the "Terrible of 74 guns; while he silenced the "Trident" of 64 guns, leaving her to be taken by others, and attacked the "Tonnant" of 80 guns, in such a way as would probably have added her to his list, had it not been for the lower deck guns of his ship carrying away their breechings at the critical moment. This of itself was a proof of the work he had already got out of his guns; and, with many other indications, though we have no direct evidence from logs or other books, shows that he must have paid extraordinary attention to the practice of quick firing. Such wonderful results were not gained without constant exercise and remarkable skill; but those qualities would have been of little service had the admiral not possessed, to a degree beyond any of his contemporaries, the cool judgment, the rapid decision at the critical moment, and the unshrinking resolution, which are the property of few, and which alone ensure brilliant success on the day of trial.

In contrast with the personal share of the day's fighting taken by Hawke, it must strike anyone as remarkable that with so many gallant captains, so very little more was done than he did himself; and

curiously enough, the unfortunate Captain Fox, who suffered by sentence of a court-martial for not taking his proper share, was one of the few to whom a ship of the enemy, the "Fougueux," struck. But though Hawke excepts him alone from the general praise bestowed on his officers, it is clear that they were not all of the calibre of those who have been specially mentioned above; and this it was in all probability which prevented the admiral's despatch from giving entire satisfaction in the squadron. He had said all he could say, but omissions would be suggestive. Thus we find Warren writing to Anson, on November 26th, as follows: "I have set all matters straight with the gentlemen of Sir Edward's squadron, who were a good deal dissatisfied at some expressions in his account of the action." *

But if only a portion of the English squadron behaved consummately well, what must be said of the French? M. L'Etenduère and his captains have never till quite of late received their full share of credit for this battle. It was a splendid achievement. They did nothing which was not the best that could be done under the circumstances. When the English squadron, which, making all allowance for its smaller size, and the inferior weight of metal in each ship, was a decidedly superior force, was first descried, one large ship was detached to help the frigates to protect the convoy; and so sufficient was that protection that it saved the whole; while the remaining eight ships were skilfully formed into line, with a van, centre, and rear; and

* Anson Correspondence, Addl. MSS., British Museum.

though ready to make off if the English would let them, yet they contrived to keep the weather-gage, and make an excellent fight of it. Indeed, they inflicted on the English a loss of 700 killed and wounded, a loss very nearly equal to their own, which amounted to about 800. Finally the "Intrepide," which, as Hawke reports, had received less damage than her neighbours, goes down at the critical moment to the help of the French admiral, and, dangerously surrounded as the "Tonnant" was, contrives to bring her off, in spite of Rodney, Saunders, and Saumarez—to say nothing of the blundering Captain Fox. So gallant was the front shown by those two ships that the English, when morning broke, thought it best, after the rude handling they had received, to decline the pursuit. Thus the French admiral, who was badly wounded, might well be pardoned for having, with a touch of the vanity sometimes attributed to the nation, magnified the number of English line of battle-ships with which he had been engaged to twenty, instead of fourteen. If their navy had distinguished itself in other encounters as they did in this and in Anson's engagement, the history of the times might have been very different.

On a consideration of the whole affair it is clear that much of the success of the French resistance should be attributed to the comparative size and thickness of the sides* of their ships, to the number of their crews, and weight of metal. It has been

* Out of 134 shot from lower-deck guns which struck the "Tonnant," only one penetrated. See "French Account by Authority," Ekins' "Naval Tactics," p. 18.

already mentioned with regard to size that in consequence of the capture of the enemy's ships in the early part of this war, and the discovery that they were so greatly superior to the English vessels of the same nominal rate, an entire change was gradually commenced, by which in the course of time some sort of equality was at last obtained. On the other points also changes were in contemplation.

It was shortly before Anson's and Hawke's battles that Warren wrote thus to the former :—

I am greatly pleased to hear it has been proposed, with a prospect of success, to augment the number of men and weight of metal in all the different classes of our ships, to put them on a par with those of the French. When that is the case there will be no excuse left for ill-behaviour ; and I dare say upon all occasions, when no extraordinary or unforeseen accident shall intervene, our ships and people will give a good account of their enemies of equal force when and wherever they meet. For I cannot help thinking we have this advantage of them, that our officers are better seamen than theirs, and I hope as valiant and our men in general more robust and stronger ; and they never were thought to want courage, though they have very little virtue of any other kind.*

The last remark may go for what it is worth. If these statements require confirmation the testimony of the clever Admiral Knowles, at about the same date, might be added. He says, in a letter of suggestions to Anson :—

The unthinking populace are too free to censure without inquiring into the reasons of things, and imagine it strange an English ship of war of 70 guns cannot take a French ship of

* Anson Correspondence.

the same force, whereas it is pretty apparent that our 70-gun ships are little superior to their ships of 52 guns.*

Still further,—the expression used in Hawke's celebrated despatch, as it probably referred to this superiority, and not only to the number of guns, supplies a commentary both on the need of improvement, and on the phenomena of the battle he describes: "As the enemy's ships were large, except the 'Severn,' they took a great deal of drubbing." It was this homely English word which puzzled King George II. when Lord Chesterfield, Secretary of State, was reading the despatch to him. He asked what it meant. At this instant the Duke of Bedford, First Lord of the Admiralty, entering the closet, Lord Chesterfield begged leave to refer the King to his Grace, as he could explain it perfectly. The King, who had heard of the story, laughed heartily, and said he now knew very well what "drubbing" meant. The Duke had, a short time before, been assaulted on the Lichfield race-course, and roughly handled.

The respect for the size, force, and conduct of the French ships, impressed on the English fleet, is remarkably evidenced by the Council of War to which Hawke refers in his despatch. For once we may be sure that such a Council was not summoned to take off a responsibility which the Commander-in-Chief ought to have undertaken himself. His letter to Commodore Legge gives his own opinion that "all my ships are in so shattered a condition that I could not pursue," and

* Anson Correspondence.

we may be quite sure that eight captains, of whom Harland, Rodney, Watson, and Saunders were four, would not have signed the minutes if there had been any help for it. The resolutions to which they came were as follows :—

1. That four ships, the least of them of 60 guns, could only be sufficient to go in quest of the two French ships, the "Tonnant" of 80 guns, and the "Intrepide" of 74, which had escaped from the action in the evening of the 14th.

2. That none of the ships under their command were at present in a condition to be sent on this service.

3. That by the time a sufficient number of them could have been got ready it would be impracticable to come up with the enemy's ships.

Though there could not have been stronger testimony to the superior importance of heavy batteries and large ships, it can hardly be imagined that such men could come to such resolutions if the course of the battle had not left the ships of the best officers in a very bad condition, and suggested a want of confidence in the rest. Hawke, we have seen, was himself wounded, and his own battered ship was no doubt one of those which must have remained. And here it may be remarked that the gallant Frenchmen would probably, even if sought, never have been found ; for not only had they the start of a whole October night, but they took care not to steer towards the French coast, but out to sea, until they were about a hundred leagues west of Ushant, in a track not much frequented. There they lay-to, and repaired damages ; and, after some time, when the coast was clear, made their way to Brest.

Before, however, the Council of War would allow itself to be constituted, Captain Watson, supported by the whole of the other seven captains who had been summoned, made a formal objection to "ranking with Captain Fox till his character should be cleared up with regard to the aspersions cast upon it for his behaviour in action with the enemy on the 14th instant"; and Fox was accordingly excluded from the court. In order to collect all the facts connected with the battle into one group, and to form a clear idea of Hawke's position, it may be well to refer at once, in a few words, to the court-martial held upon this officer soon after the arrival of the squadron in port. It may be premised that Fox had a very fair reputation in the service, and, while under Warren's command, had, only a little before, successfully led a small squadron which had frightened away a French force not much inferior to itself, under M. Dubois de la Mothe, and captured a very large number of merchant ships which were under its convoy.

All the numerous details of the battle which came out in the evidence adduced before the court, over which Sir Peter Warren presided, exactly corroborate, it need hardly be said, the public account given by Hawke. He himself was necessarily the official prosecutor, but it is evident that though he agreed with his captains that there should be a trial, the pique, disgust, and contempt felt for Fox was on their side, not on his. On November 4th he tells the Admiralty that he "could not avoid desiring the attendance of the captains of his squadron in order that they might give their reasons for refusing to rank with Mr. Fox.

It is doing justice both to His Majesty and to Mr. Fox." His own position is dignified. He asks but one question ; and there is an entire absence of anything like a desire to crush the prisoner. But the evidence of Fox's fellow-captains was uniform ; it was formed from independent points of view, and it really left the court no choice. The admirable behaviour of Saunders and Rodney came out strongly in evidence; but it was their sense of being deserted by Fox, and of the two French ships having escaped through his failure of duty, which forms the chief feature of the court-martial. Rodney especially describes his being exposed to the fire of four of the enemy's ships when, as he asserted, Fox's ship, the "Kent," might well have taken off some of it.

In his defence the prisoner spoke with great respect of the French : "The members of this court know how well the French ships of war fight" ; and he defended himself from Rodney's charge by declaring that the reason why he did not support the "Eagle" was because he believed that she was moving forward to attack the next ship ahead, and leaving the "Neptune" to him ; but finding she did not, he himself went off to the "Fougueux," which, after three-quarters of an hour's engagement within pistol-shot, he forced to strike. But he was quite unable to get over the fatal charge of leaving the "Tonnant" while the signal for "closer action" was flying from the flagship. The court decided that his duty was to have stayed by her till he took her ; and it rightly detected other errors in judgment which he had made throughout the action. It was unanimous

in the conclusion that he had only erred in "conduct," and was only guilty of part of the offences charged.

His courage has been so fully proved to them as not to leave room for suspecting it, and part of his misconduct seems to them to proceed from his listening to the persuasions of his first lieutenant and master, and giving way to them.

Thus he was only sentenced to be dismissed his ship. He was never employed again, and in 1749 was placed on the list of rear-admirals for half-pay.

It is thus clear that Hawke had taken exactly the right line on this difficult question of bringing an officer to a court-martial. An admiral has to steer between Scylla and Charybdis. He is culpable if he allows misconduct to pass. He has every temptation to be too severe. The failure of a part of the great machine must grievously try the mettle of a man who knows how it could and ought to be worked.

Of the two last documents in reference to this battle, from which extracts may be made, the first is dated October 28th, and states to the Admiralty what promotions and appointments the admiral has made into vacancies. It concludes thus :—

The Count Du Guay, who commanded the "Terrible," and is now prisoner on board the "Devonshire," with the major part of her officers, has desired me to intercede with their Lordships for permission to return as soon as possible to France on his parole. He is an old man, and very infirm and weakly, so afflicted with asthma that he can hardly breathe.

The French officers in command were often old men. M. de Court, who commanded against Mathews, was nearly 80 years of age.

It was not till October 31st that Hawke arrived at Portsmouth with his squadron and prizes. As four of the latter had been dismasted, and the remaining two only retained their foremasts, it had taken some days to refit them with jury masts, since it had to be done by the crews of ships which themselves stood in need of great repairs. The rejoicings in England were great, and the reward of the K.B. conferred on Hawke, though far below what had been thought proper in Anson's case, was not altogether inadequate. The King, at any rate, showed his appreciation of the merit he had long before detected by granting the admiral "a most gracious reception." Perhaps the Government were afraid of showing too great a readiness to award distinctions to a man from whom they had begun to expect a great deal more.

So much for the battle which, from the nearest land to the place where it was fought, is commonly called Hawke's Battle off Ushant. There is not much more to be said about the admiral himself till the war was over, or rather succeeded by the truce which goes by the name of the Peace of Aix la Chapelle. He obtained his wish, which was to be continued as second in command under Sir Peter Warren, who had recovered his health; and he practically commanded the Western Squadron till Warren, who died in 1752, definitely retired on July 26th, 1748.

The following letter from the Duke of Bedford, "recommending" Sir Edward Hawke as Member of Parliament for Portsmouth, has been preserved. It runs as follows:—

Admiralty Office, Dec. 18, 1747.

SIR,

On occasion of the melancholy news of Commodore Legge's death being confirmed, I have this day wrote to Mr. Mayor of Portsmouth, recommending you to the Gentlemen of the Corporation to be their representative in Parliament. I most heartily wish you good success, and am, Sir, yours, &c.,

BEDFORD.

Thus, according to the customs of those simple times, the Admiralty showed their appreciation of a distinguished officer. The King should make him a Knight, the First Lord of the Admiralty a Member of Parliament. Whether for better or worse, the navy has never had the place in the Councils of the nation which it had in the "good old days." Who would think of calling back those days? Yet, perhaps, if naval men could not shine in debate, it was not a bad thing to have in the House a few of that class of them who did not owe their seats to the mere accidents of birth or fortune, but who had attained distinction by the display of noble qualities in the face of the enemy. These men presented the visible emblems of one constituent element of British greatness. Nor were they the men to urge their country to unnecessary wars, for they knew what war meant; but they understood also what the safety and honour of Great Britain required.

We may now regard our admiral as fully established in the great position which he held for so many years in the eyes of his countrymen. They well understood the significance of the motto which he selected when, soon after this battle, his arms were granted with the

motto "Strike."* It was a compact. He never failed to strike when they gave him fair play.

That there were some who understood the sacrifice he had made in refusing to look for galleons or merchant ships, in order that he might concentrate the national force upon the destruction of the enemy, is evidenced by the following letter from a Mr. Perrie :—

DEAR SIR,

Amidst the universal acclamations of the public for your late services to your King and country accept my private congratulations for your good success, so much owing to your own courage and prudent conduct. I could have wished, indeed, that more of the enemy's merchantmen had fallen into your hands ; but when I consider that what you lost in this way in point of fortune is very amply made up to you in the lustre of an unsullied reputation, I doubt whether I should not be in the wrong to wish the affair otherwise than it has happened.

Of Hawke's contemporaries Boscawen was the most distinguished. He had served with reputation under Vernon, and in Anson's battle. During the last part of the war he had been in command of the naval and military forces in the Madras Presidency, assisted at a critical moment by young Clive, who here commenced his extraordinary career. When the Peace put a stop to further proceedings, he came home with a character only second to Hawke's. He had preceded him by some years as a Member of

* NOTE.—In Nov., 1748, on becoming a Knight of the Bath, he memorialised for arms for himself and the other descendants of his father, Edward Hawke, stating that his family was descended from the family of Hawke, county Cornwall, but had not previously recorded arms.

Parliament, and in 1751 found a place at the Board of Admiralty. Thus when the smouldering war again burst forth in flame, these were the two men to whom the country had learnt to look. Pocock had scarcely yet begun to earn his high reputation; but he had acquired the necessary experience. Rodney, Saunders, and Watson had already commenced a fine career, under Hawke's leadership; and Keppel, who addresses Anson as if he were that officer's son,—and indeed, having been the favourite midshipman of that officer in the "Centurion," he had clearly established some such relationship,—was learning to look upon Hawke as his friend. Howe was as yet but little known. He also was preparing to be one of Hawke's most distinguished pupils.

And now let us ask the question whether history has been wholly true to her vocation in ascribing everything to Chatham in the Seven Years' War. It is too common a practice with our historians to notice only the contrast between the disastrous commencement of that war under Newcastle, and the splendid operations which established the empire under Chatham. But they forget the immense progress which had been made by the navy in the previous war; and they fail to observe the work which had been done by Anson, and the noble spirit which had been infused into the service by the gallant men who have been mentioned in this narrative. These were the men made to Chatham's hand, whom even he at first did not understand how to employ, but who, as soon as he had learnt his lesson, carried his name to the highest pitch of glory.

In these pages it is of course necessary to abstract and cut short the masses of detail which would expose to the world, if people could stop to read, how much good and first-rate work went to the making of such a character as Hawke's. Suffice it that the impression produced upon one who has necessarily studied the whole series of documents, is that the prudence, fortitude, high-mindedness, and simplicity which they display, are of themselves the indications of a great upward bound in the *morale* of the nation, and that it would have been surprising if they had not borne the fruit they did in the ensuing struggle for national existence. This ought not to detract from Chatham's merit, but it is absurd to worship an idol.

After so high a flight, it is an act of audacity to descend to such a matter as naval uniform ; but there is something to be said for linking the higher and lower subjects in one. It is by no means difficult to imagine a connection between the fine spirit with which the Royal Navy emerged out of the first Spanish war, and the order issued by Anson at the close of it for a uniform dress. The chaos which had marred its opening efforts was well typified by the varieties of naval attire. Smollett's description of the dandy captain's dress in " Roderick Random " reads like an absurd caricature ; but if the following anecdote given by Charnock* is as true as the author believed it to be, the caricature is little more than another version of the fact. Captain, afterwards Sir William, Burnaby, was the dandy. His ship went out to the

* "Biog. Nav.," vol. v. p. 131.

West Indies to join the fleet of Vernon, whose slovenly habits were quite as much an affectation as the captain's finery.

Burnaby, immediately after his arrival at Jamaica, proceeded as is customary, to pay a visit of ceremony to the Commander-in-Chief. On this solemn occasion he equipped himself gorgeously in a suit of silk, or, as some say, velvet, very splendidly laced. The admiral was, as was not uncommon with him, coarsely dressed in a very ordinary manner. When Mr. Burnaby was announced, Mr. Vernon rose from his escritoire with much pretended and apparent confusion, and hurrying into an inner apartment, put on a wig of ceremony, which having adjusted with pretended haste and embarrassment, he advanced towards Mr. Burnaby with great gravity, and desired to know his commands ; when the latter informed him with much precision and attention to form "that he had the honour to command the bomb-vessel which had just arrived from England." Mr. Vernon, with a ludicrous and grotesque alteration of countenance, replied, "Gad so, Sir, I really took you for a dancing-master." Certainly the coarse rudeness and reprehension of the admiral was, to the full, as ridiculous as the finical attention to dress of the other.

The following order shows that there was much irregularity, and, below the rank of lieutenant, that there was no attempt at a uniform at all.

ADMIRALTY, April 19th, 1748.

Whereas, we judge it necessary, in order the better to distinguish the rank of sea-officers, to establish a military uniform clothing for admirals, captains, commanders, and lieutenants, and judging it also necessary that persons acting as midshipmen should likewise have a uniform clothing, in order to their conveying the appearance which is necessary to distinguish the class to be in the rank of gentlemen, and give them better credit and figure in executing the commands of their superior officers, you are hereby required and directed to conform your-

self to the said establishment by wearing clothing accordingly at all proper times, and to take care that such of the aforesaid officers and midshipmen who may be from time to time under your command do the like, . . patterns of which for admirals and vice-admirals, and also for rear-admirals, may be seen at the Admiralty Office, and patterns for each class of other officers, viz., captains who have taken post for three years, and by His Majesty's regulations rank as colonels, all other post-captains who, by the said regulations, rank as lieutenant-colonels, commanders not taking post, and lieutenants, and likewise for midshipmen, will be lodged at the Navy Office, and with the Storekeepers of His Majesty's yard at Plymouth.

The colours, blue and white, according to the Duke of Bedford, were suggested by the King's admiration for the riding-dress worn by "my Duchess." *

On May 5th, 1748, the Proclamation for the cessation of hostilities was made, consequent on the signature of the Preliminaries of Peace; and one of the marks of the cessation was a promotion of admirals, by which Hawke became Vice-Admiral of the Blue. From July 26th, 1748, when he is ordered to succeed Warren in supreme command of the fleet, till November 10th, 1752—a period which, added to that which had passed since he hoisted his flag in July 1747, amounts to nearly five years and a half—he is continuously employed as Commander-in-Chief, nearly all the time at Portsmouth, but in 1750 in the Thames and Medway. For the next two years and a half he seems to have been unemployed, until the notes of war are again sounded. On February 12th, 1755, he is ordered to hoist his flag once more.

* Barrow's "Anson."

His service is then again continuous till very near the conclusion of the Peace of Paris.*

This chapter may close with some verses from the "Gentleman's Magazine" (October, 1747), which, though not worth much in themselves, indicate the sense of relief and recovery which the nation had begun to entertain in that year, and the persons to whom it owed its improved position.

Her lance inverted, head reclined,
As late Britannia pensive sate,
Revolving in her anxious mind
The woes of her declining state,

Fame in her rapid flight drew near,
And sounding loud from every tongue,
"Hawke," "Anson," "Warren," in her ear,
The Genius roused, depressed so long.

"If Anson, Warren, Hawke," she said,
Now rising with a sprightly bound,
"Are known to fame, my laurelled head
With pristine glory shall be crowned.

No more I'll sigh, no more complain,
My ancient rights at length restored,
Restored my empire o'er the main,
And dreaded round the globe my sword."

The effect produced by the action of the Royal Navy was, indeed, the sole ground on which the country could claim a Peace. The land forces had never had a fair chance, and nearly 80 millions of

* It may be mentioned, to prevent mistakes, that though Hawke was appointed in 1749 to command the squadron ordered to convoy the transports to Nova Scotia, he was not actually sent.

debt had been incurred, chiefly in subsidies and the pay of Hanoverian troops. But the Navy of France had been most seriously crippled in battles and single fights, her hostile colonial enterprises effectively checked, and her support of Spain had injured that decaying State even more than before. The commerce of all three nations had suffered enormously; but the balance of prizes was estimated to be in favour of Great Britain by two millions sterling.

CHAPTER V.

HAWKE'S POSITION DURING THE PEACE AND AT THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.—CONDITION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

1748—1756.

THERE is naturally little worth mention in the history of Sir Edward Hawke during the Peace from 1748 to 1755; but the all-important part he took in the Seven Years' War which succeeded it, demands a few preliminary words on the general course of events which led up to that war, and brought him and his comrades once more to the front.

The too-pacific policy of Sir Robert Walpole, coupled with the weakness, inherent during its earlier days, in the Hanoverian Succession, had been the direct cause of that French aggression and Spanish arrogance which forced England into the first of the two wars under consideration. The incapacity of the two Pelhams, who succeeded to Walpole's place, aggravated by the political factions which struggled for supremacy over his coffin, led the French to pursue still further the colonial enterprises which had been checked by the British Navy, and to take every advantage of the Peace as a preparation for reopening the war under better auspices.

The Peace of Aix la Chapelle, concluded in October, 1748, had been chiefly due to the exertions of Mr. Pelham the Prime Minister, of Lord Chesterfield, and of Lord Sandwich. It was specially distasteful to the English, who found themselves obliged to relinquish their one acquisition made during the late war, the island of Cape Breton, and to consent to the disgrace of giving hostages for the performance of that condition. Nothing could more clearly show the importance attached by France to her scheme of colonisation than these terms. On the other hand, Hanover had been preserved; Holland was saved,—always, and most wisely, a central point in English foreign policy; and France had to give up by land what had cost her much more than the English had spent at sea. As far as England and France were concerned, it was simply a temporary return to the *status quo ante*, as the best escape from an anomalous and confused political situation, in which the nations of Europe were losing sight of the Balance of Power, and spending vast sums of money they hardly knew why. The English felt that their system of subsidies had become, not only ruinous, but ridiculous.

And yet, as far as France and England were concerned, both countries had a very clear instinct that the ground of their particular struggle was not obscure, and could not be really removed by the Peace. It might suit either party to side with Austria or Prussia, as the case might be, and the position of Hanover necessarily led to such combinations; but behind those alliances lay the mighty con-

test for supremacy at sea, for ships, colonies, and commerce. The three Bourbon thrones had not been acquired for a mere show of grandeur; the prospects of a French America and a French India had succeeded to the merely European ambition of Louis Quatorze.

In pursuance of this policy bodies of French soldiers had been gradually introduced during the Peace into the new forts built at the back of the British settlements; the colonists could make no united, and therefore no effective, resistance; and England was not at all likely to begin over again an expensive war over such a trifle. The pitiful feebleness of its Government was perfectly understood by the French.

Thus a petty border-warfare was proceeding between the colonies of the two nations, in which the English were sure to come off the worst, and so loud were the threats of the one and the complaints of the other, that the Government were obliged to yield so far as to equip a fleet and impress seamen.

Lord Anson was the main link between this feeblest of Governments and the Royal Navy, of which he had been the chief administrator for many years before he became, in 1751, First Lord of the Admiralty. His position was, in reality, an unfortunate one for his reputation; but it was the natural consequence of the marriage which took place at this time between him and the daughter of Lord Hardwicke. That clever lawyer was the political ally of the Pelhams; and Anson, who never became independent of him, was thus mixed up with

that particular section of the political world which was more tainted than any other with the intrigue and corruption of faction, and less capable of taking in hand the greater politics which a nation in such a position as Great Britain can never neglect with impunity. The apparent success of this party was its chief misfortune. All the various, often inconsistent, elements of the opposition had gradually melted away. Pulteney, Chesterfield, Bedford, Wyndham, Bolingbroke, had either died or disappeared from the political arena. Carteret had sunk to a mere secondary position. Frederick, Prince of Wales, whose factious court had at least afforded a standing-point for the gradual formation of a new phase of Party Government, had passed away, unregretted. Pelham himself followed in 1754. Who was left? One man only remained, who had, from long habituation, acquired the practice of holding in his hands all the threads of official life, one man only to whom the King was sufficiently accustomed to be able to act with him ; though he freely confessed that in Germany such a man would hardly be reckoned fit for the post of Chamberlain at one of its smallest courts. This was Pelham's elder brother, the Duke of Newcastle, a strange compound of ill-mixed qualities.

The statesman whom Newcastle would fain trust to manage the House of Commons was the elder Fox, perhaps as able a man as the elder Pitt, and with many of the great qualities which distinguished his own more famous son ; but like that son, his want of character hung like a weight of lead about

his neck. Such a man was of course a rotten stick to lean upon. These were the rulers of Great Britain at a moment when she required the highest statesmanship and noblest patriotism. The appointment and equipment of the incompetent Admiral John Byng was the first disastrous outcome of an incompetent Ministry. And here it is but right to lay the chief portion of the blame on the shoulders of Lord Anson, to whom in most respects the country had been largely indebted. His was mainly a political error in which others shared ; but we gladly mention in this place a grand administrative reform for which he deserves every praise.

To Anson is due the credit of, for the first time, enabling a fleet to be started forth on an emergency with a body of permanently organised sea-soldiers, the marines. Heretofore the country had been obliged to depend on regiments, specially raised indeed for the purpose, but disbanded when not immediately wanted, and never combined in one corps. He had long pressed for this great reform, which had been an old scheme of Lord Sandwich's, but now took the organic form with which we have been familiar ever since that day, and to which no little of the success of the British Navy has been due. Like so many other simple improvements, it seems strange that the country could ever have hesitated to adopt it ; but less strange when one reflects upon the difficulties which have been so often placed in the way of a hearty and generous recognition of the value of the services of the Royal Marines. No less than fifty companies were raised at this period ; but not with

sufficient promptitude to satisfy Hawke's eager wish to substitute them altogether for the regiments of the Line with which some part of his fleet was supplied. He probably had some hand in the establishment of the force, for he writes as if it was a scheme long familiar to himself as well as to the Admiralty. By the year 1759 the numbers of the corps had mounted up to 18,000.*

It was to Hawke that the general equipment of the fleet was intrusted; and we find his flag flying from the "Terrible" at Spithead as early as February 12th, 1755. Boscawen soon joined him, his destination being to deal with the great French fleet which had been collecting in North America; while Hawke was to superintend the home service at sea. Of course this was all too late. The fleet should have been equipped in the previous autumn, an ultimatum sent to the French the moment the fleet was ready, and the ports then instantly blockaded—just indeed as was done next year. We have seen how alien such measures were to the spirit and capacity of the Government.

Hawke's letters and despatches of this date are replete with the masses of detail natural to the equipment of a great fleet, which had been allowed to dwindle down to nothing during the Peace. The difficulty of obtaining seamen was, however, by far the greatest of those with which he had to deal. All sorts of questions relating to impressment come before him, and every effort is made on his part

* Barrow's "Anson," p. 235.

to alleviate the extreme hardships incident to the system. Desertion, however, must be stopped, and soldiers are largely employed on this service. When, a little later, the need of seamen to man Holburne's squadron becomes serious, he tells the Admiralty :—

> Last night at 12 I sent boats to Ryde, Cowes, Yarmouth, Lymington, Southampton, and Chichester ; and sent the "Savage" sloop to Poole, and the "Arundel" to cruise off Portland for a few days. At the same time I ordered a press ashore and from the merchant ships in this harbour, by which we have got about forty men. I shall use my best endeavours to get the squadron to sea.

Of course, with such material the difficulties of fitting out and preparing ships to meet an enemy at a moment's notice are very great. Both he and Boscawen have to reject large numbers of these very men who had cost so much trouble to impress, as "totally unserviceable"; and even, after this, —just as we have already observed in 1743,—the sickness and mortality among them is tremendous. Boscawen's fleet lost something like 2,000 men on his short North American expedition,—where the climate could not be in fault,—from this cause ; and we shall soon see Hawke's own squadron in the same condition. It is during Hawke's superintendence of the equipment of this fleet that he turns his attention to Haslar Hospital, which he finds sadly deficient ; but he reports that the whole system of attending to the sick on board ship is still worse. The necessaries for this purpose, supplied from the Government stores, were disgracefully bad in every respect. A reform dates from his report. It is also at this time that he decides

upon Porchester Castle as a better place for the reception of French prisoners than the premises of certain Mr. Ward at Fortune [Forton] near Gosport.

While on these local matters, it may be observed that Hawke's delicate position as Member for Portsmouth during the years of the Peace, while his flag was at the same time hoisted at the Port, was a test of tact and good sense which his official correspondence thoroughly satisfies. The same may be said as to his treatment of the complaints made by certain officers, and in reference to prizes taken in the recent war, as to which nice questions arose; and the remark may be extended to his conduct of the numerous courts-martial on which he had had to sit either as president or vice-president during the Peace, and which seem to have been assigned to him as his special province.

In his management of this difficult part of an officer's duty no one appears to have excelled him; and the remark made in Collins' Peerage, fairly summing up the opinion of the service, has been adopted by other writers: "He always took the greatest care to distribute justice without any regard to rank or connections. The innocent were sure to meet with his protection, and the guilty to feel the rod of punishment." It is scarcely possible to overrate the importance of such a service at a time when the mismanagement of the navy, during almost the whole period which had elapsed since it was actively employed in Queen Anne's reign, had left it in the condition described in a former chapter. A standard of professional duty was thus created and maintained,

all the more seasonable after the disgraceful exhibition furnished by the courts-martial on Mathews and his officers.

The men who were to wield the weapons of naval war were now ready to hand, but it is impossible to conceive a Government more entirely behindhand in information or efficient preparation for war. They could not but be aware that the French were making great preparations, both by land and sea ; yet no less than three squadrons stole away from Brest to the West Indies and Canada, mustering in all a fleet of twenty-five sail of the line, while the fleet of Boscawen, sent out to protect the British Colonies, mustered only eleven. But he had orders to fight, and was fortunate enough to cut off two of them in a fog ; and the fleet sent out in all haste under Admiral Holburne more than balanced the rest. The French Ambassador left England, but there was a great deal more to be done before his country was ready for the final struggle, and no Declaration of War was issued on either side.

It was now determined to send Hawke to sea without delay under secret Instructions, still preserved in the family, and dated July 22nd, 1755. They were issued by the Lords Justices, the King being in Hanover, where none but he could gather up the threads of the Continental alliances which alone could save his hereditary dominions. These Instructions state the grounds of the war to be "divers encroachments" of the French upon the American colonies, and their seizure of a British fort on the Ohio ; and they order the admiral to cruise between Ushant and Cape

Finisterre for the purpose of intercepting M. Du Guay or any other French squadron, and sending them to Portsmouth or Plymouth to be taken care of. These instructions are soon extended to the seizure of merchant-ships ; nor were these to be confiscated. The captured vessels—some 300 in number—were faithfully retained as a kind of deposit against the English claims, nor were they sold till every attempt at an accommodation had proved hopeless. The French angrily reproached the Government for these proceedings ; but Fox in his reply declined to restore the vessels, since the French had begun hostilities in a time of profound peace. The best proof that the British policy was justifiable is that the French contented themselves for nearly a year with remonstrances. They were well assured that they had so much the best of the bargain both in what they had already effected, and in the scheme they were preparing for the surprise of Minorca, that a certain amount of affront and pecuniary loss might well be pocketed. Du Guay escaped from his pursuers by taking a circuitous route outside the too narrow limits assigned to Hawke, but 8,000 French seamen were taken, and their loss was much felt. The British fleet, however, manned by miserable pressed men, suffered severely from disease, and the beer was, as usual in those days, vilely bad. Hawke was obliged to come home earlier than was intended by the Admiralty, and sharp words passed ; but on October 30th, 1755, he hoists his flag again, and is in command at Portsmouth through the autumn and winter.

And this brings us to the concluding manœuvre of

the French Government, by which, when fully prepared, after years spent in amusing the English, they opened the war in earnest.

The French and English Ministers were occupied at Christmas, 1755, in hurling official documents at each other's heads. These were accompanied on the part of the former with the most truculent threats of invading England by land and sea forces, and Hanover by 200,000 troops. Great numbers of flat-bottomed boats were constructed in several French ports. Infantry and artillery were marched into the maritime provinces. Marshal Belleisle was a sort of mouthpiece by which the feint was kept before the British people, who remembered only too well how imminent the prospect had been in the previous war, when Marshal Saxe's veterans had been actually embarked. The people might be deceived by these threats; it was unpardonable that the Government should not have known better; for Mann was sending word from Florence that a large fleet and army were preparing at Toulon to attack Minorca, and other advices to the same purpose had come thick on one another even from as early a date as September, 1755. In February, 1756, there remained no doubt about it; for Blakeney himself, the acting Governor of Minorca, gave full intelligence. Yet Newcastle's Government neglected every warning, and Anson distributed the fleet, under Hawke, Keppel, Osborn, and other officers, in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay. With the exception of two or three ships at Gibraltar and Port Mahon, the Mediterranean had been left to take care of itself. Who could believe that with

these two fortresses exposed to attack at a moment's notice, there was no such thing as a Mediterranean fleet? It required yet another war to teach the nation what even the loss of Minorca failed to teach, that it must always, and under all circumstances, keep an overwhelming naval force in that sea.

It was not till February 3rd, 1756, that the numerous officers on leave of absence from Minorca were ordered back to their posts; nor were any means even then provided for their return to duty. So entirely occupied were the Government with the panic of an invasion that, on the very day above-named, they issued a proclamation that all horses, oxen, and cattle "should be driven and removed at least twenty miles" from the place where an invasion should be made," —not a very encouraging order, in the absence of every sort of land-preparation to resist the enemy. Nor was it till March 8th that Byng was ordered to equip a squadron of ten line-of-battle ships to reinforce the garrison of Port Mahon, and protect Minorca from invasion. Then began one of the most tumultuous and tragic periods of our modern history. The people, as soon as the report of Byng's failure reached England, practically took the reins of Government into their own hands, and there is scarcely a person of eminence who emerged from the affair without damage. The long pent-up disgust with a Government which the nation already despised, and now found to have been outwitted by the French, alternating with panic fear, suddenly expressed itself in a way which made Newcastle tremble for his head. The impossible story told by Horace Walpole

of his replying to the deputation from the city: "Oh, indeed, he shall be tried immediately; he shall be hanged directly," was only too exactly typical of the whole of the proceedings; the tragical death of Colonel Byng from the shock he sustained at witnessing the conduct of the Portsmouth mob when his brother was taken ashore as a prisoner, was scarcely less typical of the profound feeling which was excited throughout the country. It does not, however, belong strictly to a biography of Lord Hawke.

Hawke was fortunately clear of every connection with these proceedings. He had returned to port, as we have seen, on May 8th, 1755, from his cruise in the Channel. The instant the news of Byng's action arrived in England, although only from the reports of the enemy, he was ordered to sail in the 50-gun ship "Antelope," with sealed Instructions. Rear-Admiral Saunders was sent with him, as second in command, to supersede Temple West; and Lord Tyrawley, who had been on a too long leave of absence from his command at Port Mahon, was now, having lost his island, sent to supersede General Fowke in the government of Gibraltar. The wags called it "a little cargo of courage." Hawke's Instructions, requiring him to repair to Portsmouth, were dated June 8th; on June 9th he reported that he was ready to sail; and on June 16th he was on his way. The haste with which all this was done has been much blamed; but the main facts of the battle were certainly known, and it was wise to leave nothing more in Byng's hands. It was still hoped that Blakeney might hold out.

The Instructions require the admiral, after superseding Byng, to—

make an immediate and expeditious enquiry into the conduct and behaviour of the captains of the ships hereby put under your command; and if you find any reason to believe any of them to have been tardy, and not to have acted with true spirit and vigour for the honour and service of the King and nation, you are forthwith to suspend such captains, and appoint others in their stead in whom you can confide for properly executing their duty. You are to order the captain of the "Antelope" to receive Admiral Byng and Rear-Admiral West on board, and return with them to Spithead; and if you shall suspend any of the captains, you are to send them also home in her.

He is to save Port Philip if possible, and if not, to prevent the French from communicating with the island. He is to protect Gibraltar, secure British trade in the Mediterranean, destroy the enemy's privateers, and to keep his ships clean by sending them into Gibraltar, or some of the King of Sardinia's ports.

Under these orders, which Hawke opened on his arrival on July 4th, the commissioned officers of both flagships were sent home along with the two admirals; and the new Commander-in-Chief now hoists his flag on board the "Ramilies," from which ship that of Byng had been hauled down. He reports to the Admiralty that Byng made no complaint of any of the captains who served under him in the late battle.

An interesting notice of Hawke's own sentiments in relation to Byng's miscarriage is supplied among the "Political Anecdotes" to be found in the 'Gentleman's Magazine" (1766). It is written in a spirit of intense hostility to Pitt, who had just then entered upon his second Administration; but may be

true enough as to the facts. After describing the great Minister's patronage of Byng's cause, and his attempt, after he had driven Newcastle from power, to bring the disaster home to that Minister and his Government (partly on the ground of Byng's ships being unfit to cope with those of the French, which carried 50-pounders on their lower decks), the writer tells us that—

a day was appointed by the House to enquire into these allegations, and the necessary papers were ordered to be laid before it, with the opinion of the present President of the Council, preparatory to their judgment. The old Administration were so much alarmed that in several meetings at Lord Royston's, they absolutely despaired of their cause. In the interim Sir Edward Hawke returned from the Mediterranean ; and being invited to Lord Royston's, set them all right by a bare recital of facts.

When the day of arraignment [in the House] came, the now President of the Council delivered in the papers at the table, with his opinion "that the late Administratiou had done their duty." The patriot [Pitt] played all his artillery over again till Admiral Hawke assured the House that the thundering Member was mistaken in every point ; "that the French ships carried no 50-pounders ; if they had they would have been a great disadvantage to themselves, as being by their weight rendered incapable of being worked ; that Byng's ships were so far from being in want of stores and provisions that in the condition he received them from Mr. Byng he proceeded with the squadron to sea, and cruised ninety odd days, without complaint of the want of either." And being asked, if he had commanded in the room of Byng, whether he thought he had force enough to beat the enemy, answered : "By the grace of God, he would have given a good account of them." Every then member of the House may remember how the patriotic abettor of cowardice stood abashed, as well as the author of his information, when facts overthrew him. Sir Edward Hawke was never forgiven by the Secretary.

On July 10th Hawke sailed from Gibraltar ; and on July 15th, being "at sea," he reports to the Admiralty that he has just heard of the surrender of the fortress of St. Philip's at Port Mahon, and that consequently the troops sent out are of no use. The French fleet, he finds, had returned to Toulon as soon as the fortress had surrendered, and he shall now make all his dispositions for fighting it if it ventures out to sea. Next month he reports that he hears from all sides that the French fleet means to come out ; This is his one hope. It was quite a match for the English, as is proved by a list found among the Hawke Papers ; but contented with its late exploit, it never ventured out to meet them.

The admiral's difficulties now begin ; and as the Italian States, on which the English had relied when Maria Theresa was their ally in the former war, were now all ranged on the side of the enemy, the situation was entirely changed. The King of Sardinia's dominions, indeed, were not of much use before, nor were they now. On the coast of Sardinia itself there is no good port. Gibraltar was not safe for large ships ; and cruising off Toulon in the blockade of the French fleet meant, like cruising off Brest or Rochefort, constant and periodical cleaning and refitting of the fleet. The dominions of Spain remained ; but though that country, taught by recent disaster, had deliberately refused to join the French at the opening of the war, in spite of the most pressing solicitations to fulfil the old Family Compacts, her king and people were to a man—not unnaturally—hostile to the English, and delighted in every opportunity of evincing their feeling. A part of the fleet was sent to "Poyance Bay," in Majorca, for refreshments.

Trumpery complaints were made; and Hawke wrote a spirited and yet temperate letter of remonstrance to the Governor of the island.

In the ports on the coast of Spain itself matters were worse; and the spirit shown on these occasions had to be summarily dealt with. A French privateer had taken an English vessel loaded with provisions for the fleet at Gibraltar, and carried her into Algesiraz, under the very eyes of the admiral. This was too much, especially when the Governor refused to surrender her. Hawke instantly sent his boats and cut her out; but a hundred men were killed or wounded in the service by the Spanish fort and the French privateer. The Spanish Court justified their Governor, and had the impudence to complain of Hawke. The fact was that they were eager to join in the war, but were not yet prepared; nor was the English Government yet in hands strong enough to resent insults. In the West Indies the old claims had again been revived; but this was nothing to the Spanish treatment of Captain Foster, who, in command of the privateer "Antigallican," had captured a French East Indiaman, and put into Cadiz. He was forced to give up his prize and to strike his colours; was fired at for two hours, with the loss of some men killed and wounded, though he did not return a shot; robbed and abused by Spanish soldiers, and thrown into a loathsome dungeon. This was outside of Hawke's jurisdiction; and the English Government bore it like the rest, with equanimity; but it did not increase the respect for the British flag.*

* Campbell's "Admirals," vol. iv. p. 90.

What the consequences of the failure at Minorca had already been may be judged by the following extracts from a letter addressed to Hawke, on July 27th, by the Consul General at Naples :—

SIR,

Give me leave most heartily to congratulate you on your arrival in these seas, in the neighbourhood of which a public station was growing, from the reproaches of our friends and the insolence of our enemy, not a little irksome. . . . Our eyes are all turned towards you for the recovery of our credit in these parts ; and though fatal mistakes have lowered it so unhappily, and events are not absolutely within the highest human providence, we have such confidence in the ability which succeeded on the ocean, that we do not despair of finishing the season in the Mediterranean with honour, though we cannot, surely, say we have begun it so. The French Ambassador here would, however, remove one of our hopes ; having said—somewhat meanly—yesterday before the King, upon mention made that you set out from Gibraltar on the 10th to seek the enemy, that he would answer for it they would not be found ; and, indeed, we fear, from all accounts, that their return with their transports to Toulon will have been, too happily for them, effected before your arrival at Minorca.

Hawke had an opportunity of setting matters right with the Austrian Italians, who, in their zeal for France, had so far reckoned on impunity as to imprison at Leghorn the gallant Fortunatus Wright, a most successful privateer commander, for whose capture the French had offered a reward. Hawke demanded his release within twenty-four hours, and the Austrians were forced to comply. This had a salutary effect all over the Mediterranean, and put a stop to the contempt for England which was setting in.

The few salient facts here given must be taken as

the epitome of a very trying command, the details of which comprise a large correspondence. In these letters, it must be remarked as of a former collection, it is difficult to decide whether the patience and forbearance which they display under the delicate circumstances which Hawke is frankly told from England that he must respect, are more noteworthy than the spirit and decision which he shows when he feels that he must, whether the Government like it or not, act on his own responsibility. It is the one bright spot on the whole dark line of the British horizon; and the people, as all the histories of the period testify, felt profoundly the contrast which it presented to the rest. He was ordered home at the end of the year, and arrived in England on January 14th, 1757. In the letters which occur about the time of his arrival, the strain upon his health which the command had caused again comes before us; "I will wait upon their Lordships to-morrow if my health will permit." In the "Gentleman's Magazine" occurs the statement, following on the notice of his arrival: "The admiral much indisposed." He had also had to bear the domestic trial of the loss of his wife, who had died on October 28th, and the support he had hitherto received from her during his arduous service was now withdrawn. Into that private grief we cannot penetrate if we would. The correspondence also shows that the new Admiralty had questioned his right to appoint certain officers; he defended himself with spirit and success. Amongst other officers who seem to have been brought forward by him at this time are Christopher Codrington and Captain Collingwood, names

subsequently honoured throughout the navy in members of their respective families.

The writer quoted above (p. 104) gives the following account of Hawke's reception by Pitt. After describing the proceedings just mentioned in relation to the overbearing conduct of the Spanish authorities, he goes on to say :—

> On the admiral's return home Mr. Pitt sent for him, and said: "Sir, had I been in your situation in Gibraltar Bay, 'tis probable I should have acted as you did, even though I should have made a concession afterwards." The drift of this speech plainly appearing, he was interrupted with : "Sir, entrusted with the command of a squadron of the King's ships, I did my duty to my master and my country, for which I will never make any concession ; you, as Minister, may do as you please." This is the hero who terrifies France, Spain, and all the world, from pole to pole. Could he make a Boscawen or a Hawke? Or did they make him? They fought, they conquered, before he had any character; and one of them may live to do so again when he shall have no character left." *

Reading Hawke's career in the light of these anecdotes, which fit in perfectly with all we know besides, we may safely infer that whatever he may have thought of the Newcastle Administration for its blunder in delaying Byng's expedition, he was not disposed to blame Anson, under the circumstances, for its bad equipment. It does not follow that it was not badly equipped ; only that he had himself made use of equally bad materials, and could have efficiently used these.

As to his own position, it is plain that he was not only fortunate in his absence from England when

* "Gentleman's Magazine," 1766, p. 423.

Byng was fitting out for Minorca, but also that he was out of the way when the struggle between Newcastle's Government and the nation was taking place. But he was none the less opposed to the champion of the nation, Pitt, Anson's detractor; and perhaps it is the strongest proof of his merit that when such a difference had been discovered Pitt found himself yet able to employ him in the expedition to Rochefort. The explanation may partly be that when Pitt came back to full power in June, 1757, and had become convinced—probably by means of Hawke's blunt remarks—that Anson had been ill-treated by himself and his friends, and, when, in consequence, he had replaced Anson at the head of his own Admiralty, the reinstated First Lord was in a position to draw the Minister and the admiral together; but he was evidently not firm enough in his place to pull Hawke into the Board along with himself. That this was contemplated is clear from Lord Hardwicke's letter to Anson of June, 1757,* in which he tells his son-in-law that he hopes there will be room at the Admiralty for "Sir Edward Hawke, or any other man we shall like." "Room" was not found for Hawke.

All this throws light upon the subsequent relations between the great statesman and the great admiral. There was always a want of cordiality in these relations. It was exhibited in 1757, 1758, and 1759. It partly explains why no distinction was made between Hawke and other admirals by the grant of a peerage for the victory of Quiberon. It accounts for the

* Anson Correspondence.

preference shown by Pitt for a junior to Hawke when, in 1766, he placed Saunders in the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, and for his final treatment of the veteran, at the close of Hawke's official career in 1770. May it not also be suspected that the vast reputation of Lord Chatham, increasing as it has, year after year, down to our own times, has itself tended to carry with it the disparagement of one whose independence of character and title to glory stood somewhat in the way of a solitary supremacy?

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROCHEFORT EXPEDITION.
1757.

THE few words in which Pitt's position at the opening of the war has been described will have been sufficient to explain why, during the early part of 1757, he was unable to make any effectual change in the direction of military and naval movements. Dismissed on April 9th, 1757, by the King, who took advantage of his unpopular defence of Byng, and the country having been nearly three months without a Government, he was reinstated at the demand of the nation, on June 29th, and we are now to trace the combinations of that master-mind.

But though he had been unable during his first short tenure of office to produce results, Pitt had laid foundations. The Highlanders were enlisted in regiments, and thus Scotland was taken up into the strength of the country; the Militia had been modelled, nearly on its present footing, and thus the shameful necessity for defending the British Isles by foreign troops came at last to an end; and the resources of the country were now for the first time definitely pledged for the defence of Hanover. His change of policy in the last matter was justified by himself, and

accepted by the country, on the ground that Hanover was now to suffer for English interests in India and America, while previously England had been dragged into Continental quarrels for the sake of Hanover. This was by no means the whole case ; but the argument served its purpose ; and when Pitt finally took the helm, the country was prepared to make any sacrifices to help Frederick to defend Hanover, while he kept the resources of France from being employed in forwarding the Colonial policy which lay at the bottom of the conflict between herself and Great Britain. This it was which Pitt had really in view, and Frederick was but his instrument. Very naturally, it was not what the other patriotic leader of the nation, the Duke of Cumberland, had in view. In his mind, like his father's, the safety of Hanover was the first object, and the operations elsewhere only second. Hence the jars which occurred between these two patriots.

No sooner had Pitt grasped firmly the reins of office than he addressed himself to his task. The safety of the country from invasion being now more assured than it had ever previously been, he determined to execute the military manœuvre which can only succeed when the front is secure, and all other circumstances favourable, viz., to operate upon both flanks of the enemy at once. To divert the French resources from their Eastern frontier he organised an entirely new policy of surprises and descents on her northern and western coasts, and as soon as by this means all attempts of the mother country to act beyond the limits of France were rendered impossible,

she was to be dislodged from all the threatening positions in America and India which she had stealthily occupied, during the weakness of English Governments, since the time of Queen Anne. Under the inspiration of the genius of Wolfe and Clive this rough outline was filled up till it came to include not only conquest but expulsion, and the virtual extinction of France, for a time at least, as a colonising power.

For the first time since the days of Queen Elizabeth, the Sovereign, the Court, the Government, and the people of Great Britain were in union. The anomalous and unwholesome divisions of party had at last worked themselves out, or rather were for a time powerless in the presence of the uproused and determined patriotism of the people. The travail-pangs of England had been long and distressing; but, as Frederick wittily said, recognising the kindred spirit of Pitt, she had at length been delivered of a man. There was no backwardness in applying the resources which the country was now willing to supply. The need of drawing upon the future was recognised as urgent; for one generation could not reone pair the losses caused by the failure of a preceding to take its proper part, which, indeed, was hardly within its power. It was useless to play with the crisis. Money must be found and spent on all sides. Frederick must be largely subsidised, as well as assisted by a diversion on the French coasts; the Duke of Cumberland placed at the head of an efficient army; fleet upon fleet must be added to the navy; and above all a spirit must be infused into both services which should

make it impossible that the catastrophes of Mathews and Byng, Wentworth and Braddock should ever occur again. Perhaps there is no greater proof of the tremendous difficulty of the task which Pitt saw before him in planning the schemes which were destined to end so gloriously, than his offer to Spain to cede Gibraltar if she would form an alliance against France, and help England to recover Minorca. Who could believe such an offer possible after all that had taken place in the reign of George the First? Most fortunately, "the Court of Madrid resolved to maintain its neutrality, and turned a deaf ear to his suggestion."*

The events of the year 1757 were by no means commensurate with the lofty ideas with which Pitt commenced his Administration. He was under two disadvantages at the very outset of his proceedings; and to these the Hanoverian and Rochefort failures may be traced. He was not responsible in any degree for the American failures, as the expeditions had been planned independently of him; but in the two other cases he had to use the instruments ready to his hands, without much power of choice; and the summer was already in the full blaze of July before he could even sketch a plan of operations. The Duke of Cumberland, and no other, must command in Hanover; and Sir John Mordaunt was the best military officer of rank who could be thought of for the secret expedition to Rochefort, which was to inaugurate the new policy on the coast of France.

* Stanhope's "History of England," vol. iv. p. 112.

For the naval officer in command Hawke was of course the selection of the nation, quite as much as of Pitt himself; nor was Anson, Pitt's First Lord of the Admiralty, now restored, likely to recommend anyone else in preference. Under Pitt this great naval administrator, finding at last a chief who could understand and appreciate the naval service, proved his title to the praises which that chief, in his old age, so abundantly bestowed. It would have been well for Hawke's reputation if he had not been so universally pointed out for this command; but to him also failure may have been useful. It was the first and only occasion.

We shall see that Hawke was acquitted of all blame, not only technically, and by the absence of any charge against him, but by the universal voice, which speedily discovered where the blame of the Rochefort failure really attached. But this is not to say that, prudent and perhaps even necessary as his conduct was under the circumstances, it is quite conceivable that a man of a genius superior to Hawke's for complicated operations on shore might not have controlled those circumstances, and carved a different result out of the materials at his command. Hawke was essentially a sea-officer, and certainly in his own time, as such, unrivalled. There was no other of his contemporaries who would have been likely to succeed in this particular case. It is absurd to imagine, for example, that Howe would have done better, merely on the ground that he performed one small operation in the campaign with proper spirit. There is nothing in his subsequent career to justify the imagination.

Nelson alone might possibly have grappled with the difficulties presented by want of all knowledge and experience of the place, by the wretched selection of military commanders, the lateness of the season, and the numerous accidental circumstances which seemed, by some special misfortune, to cluster round this bootless expedition. That it only cost the nation a million of money, without defeat and loss of life, a court-martial, a general storm of indignation, and a cloud of pamphlets, that it was not a disastrous rout like the failure of Bligh and Howe at St. Cas the next year, or a *fiasco* like Lestock's at L'Orient, still less like Vernon's and Wentworth's at Cartagena, are only negative results, and a very poor set-off against the failure to do anything that had been intended; but, with such men as Mordaunt, Conway, and Cornwallis blocking the way, it was something in Hawke's favour that it was no worse.

Pitt had, in fact, not learnt his own lesson. The failure may be attributed to many causes; but besides those which have been mentioned as beyond his control, he himself had insured that failure by the stress he had laid in his own "Secret Instructions" on the necessity of holding Councils of War. He meant by so doing to secure harmony; he was yet to learn that harmony can only exist in mixed expeditions by placing proved and consummate commanders of both services in conjunction. In other circumstances Councils of War are mere traps and delusions.

The Rochefort Expedition of 1757, like Mathews' battle, is not an agreeable subject to dwell upon, but the duty of describing it cannot, in a life of Lord

Hawke, be evaded; nor can it be dismissed in a few passing words. In placing the outline of it before the reader, the aim of this chapter will be to abstain from repeating the mere unsupported opinions to be found in English histories, which cannot possibly afford the space required for such an extremely complicated series of documents, and on the other hand to avoid the confusion in which more prolix accounts have left the subject. From some of Hawke's letters we obtain a little more light than former writers possessed, and the attack and defence of those concerned was at the time so vigorous and various that no excuse derived from want of full materials ought now to be of any avail.

The first paper here printed will show that Pitt lost no time after his acceptance of office on June 29th. On July 11th, Lord Anson writes to Hawke from the Admiralty as follows:—

DEAR SIR,

I was very sorry you were gone out of town, as I should have wished to have had an hour's conversation with you this evening; and indeed it appears to me so material that, though I am very sorry to give you the trouble, yet I must beg the favour to see you in town, and I should be very glad [if] you would make Portsmouth in your way hither, without raising curiosity and alarm; but it is absolutely necessary that all the ships ordered to clean this spring should without a moment's [loss of] time be got to Spithead, as there may be immediate service for them. I am, &c.

ANSON.*

What was the exact position occupied by Hawke when he received this letter is not clear. He had

* Hawke Papers.

received no commission to hoist his flag, and he was not a Lord of the Admiralty. It is the first notice we have of him since he hauled down his flag in January ; though he had been intended for the service for which Admiral Holburne had received reinforcements in the spring, viz., the recapture of Louisbourg. There had been notes of failure all along the line. The home service, in the spring and summer of 1757, had been performed by Boscawen, Temple West (till he resigned), and Brodrick ; but, in spite of their vigilance, M. Dubois de la Mothe had contrived to evade the fleet once more, and had carried a squadron, along with several transports containing troops, to Louisbourg. Nor was this all. Holburne, though, when reinforced, in command of a large fleet, never found the opportunity to strike a single stroke, and —to anticipate a little—concluded his professional career under a misfortune over which, whatever might be the case previously, he certainly had no control. A tremendous hurricane which swept the American coast on September 20th dispersed, and almost destroyed, his fleet ; of which the said M. Dubois de la Mothe, taking prompt advantage, again escaped the blockade Still more fortunately, he eluded Hawke and Boscawen who, on the arrival of the news, were sent out in hot haste immediately after the return of the Rochefort Expedition to intercept him. The French indeed lost several of their convoy, and suffered severely from the storm which, like the American hurricane, drove the English squadrons from their post, and enabled their enemy to slip into Brest ; but this signified little. Fortune favours the

brave, and if the French admiral evinced his audacity rather in escaping than giving battle, he was certainly obeying the orders of his Government, wise enough under the circumstances ; and he deserved the extraordinary good fortune which brought him safe home. The end of such freaks as the two French admirals had hitherto succeeded in playing was, however, close at hand. Without a fleet which could hold its own at sea, it was impossible, however reinforced, and however well defended, to save the French colonies. In the next year Boscawen and Amherst expelled the French from Cape Breton ; the year after, Wolfe and Saunders drove them from Canada.

Hawke, it is evident, must have been already named for the secret expedition which the Minister had in view ; and already, we may suppose, had Anson hinted his doubts whether the exigencies of time and space could be chained to the axle-trees of Pitt's fiery car. It is of this time that Thackeray speaks in his "Life of Lord Chatham," when he reports that Lord Anson informed the Minister that

> the ships could not be prepared within the time specified ; he moreover desired to know their destination, that they might be victualled accordingly. Mr. Pitt replied that if the ships were not ready at the time required he would lay the matter before the King, and impeach his Lordship in the House of Commons. This spirited menace produced its effect, and the men-of-war were all equipped and prepared according to the time and manner appointed.*

This story is not irreconcilable with Lord Chatham's posthumous eulogy of Anson, but one would

* Vol. i. p. 302.

not have expected such a scene so soon after the appointment of the new First Lord of the Admiralty with Pitt's eager concurrence. Possibly it is the original ground for the still less probable story of the great Minister forcing Anson to sign despatches, the contents of which he was not allowed to see. The extraordinary secrecy preserved in relation to the Rochefort Expedition, not only during the whole time of its equipment, but after it had actually sailed, may well have appeared to demand some mythical anecdotes to account for it.

The direction in which Pitt was led to carry out his design of a descent on France must have been due to a conversation, soon after taking office, with Sir John Ligonier, the Commander-in-Chief; for we find Colonel Clarke, on July 15th, writing to the general a full account of the observations he had made upon Rochefort three years previously, and doing so in consequence of a verbal report he had recently made, and which the general desired to have in writing. This engineer-officer deserves none of the blame which was afterwards cast upon him. He showed zeal and ability in making and reporting his observations; the responsibility of founding so costly an expedition upon them rests with Pitt. It is true that the officers he selected for command, Hawke, Mordaunt, Conway, and Knowles, were present, along with himself, Anson, Lord Holderness, and Ligonier, when the matter was considered and the French pilot, Thierri, examined; but who could resist Pitt's eloquence when he had made up his mind to do "something" in res onse to the King of Prussia's urgent

solicitations, and when this enterprise had presented itself at the critical moment? It was no doubt late in the year to prepare and send forth such an armament; and everything would depend on its being a surprise; but who would make difficulties?

The question innocently asked by Sir John Mordaunt at a later date, illustrates the position. If the fleet should be sighted, and an alarm be given some days before the wind allowed it to get into Basque Roads, how was he to act? Pitt indignantly replies:—

> I am commanded by the King to signify to you His Majesty's pleasure that you do, in conformity to the latitude given by His Majesty's Instructions, judge of the practicability of the service on the spot according as contingent events and particular circumstances may require,—the King judging it highly prejudicial to the good of his service to give particular orders and directions with regard to possible contingent cases that may arise.*

It was on the actual occurrence of this very contingency that everything ultimately turned.

Hawke, with his flag hoisted on August 15th on board the "Ramilies" at Spithead, receives his "Secret Instructions" from Pitt dated on that day, and Mordaunt similar orders *mutatis mutandis;* the two generals, Conway and Cornwallis, and the two admirals, Knowles and Brodrick, next in command, receive copies of the same, sealed, and to be opened only in case the command should devolve on any one of them. To the general, of course, the direction of the force, which is to make a "descent on the French coast at or near Rochefort, and to burn, &c., all docks,

* Paper No. IV. appended to the Report of the Court of Inquiry.

magazines, &c.," is assigned ; to the admiral, the duty of " co-operation."

> You are, as far as you shall be able with the fleet under your command, to be aiding and assisting to Sir John Mordaunt in the performance of the several services aforesaid. . . . After this attempt on Rochefort shall have either succeeded or failed, and in case the circumstances of our fleet and forces shall, with prospect of success, still admit of further operations, Port L'Orient and Bourdeaux are to be considered next as the most important objects of our arms on the coast of France.

No arsenals, ships, &c., are to be retained, but all demolished, and the expedition is " to be in England at or about, as near as may be, the end of September." The clause (in Hawke's orders) on Councils of War runs as follows :—

> Whereas it is necessary that upon certain occasions Councils of War should be held, we have thought fit to appoint, and do hereby appoint such a Council, which shall consist of four of our principal sea-commanders, and of an equal number of our principal land-officers [thus adding Rodney and General Howard to those already named], including the Commanders-in-Chief. . . . And all such sea and land officers are hereby respectively directed from time to time to be aiding and assisting with their advice as often as they shall be called together by you, or the officer commanding our land forces for that purpose.

The fleet comprised sixteen line-of-battle ships, six of which were commanded by such men as Denis, Howe, Keppel, Rodney, Byron, and Barrington, seven frigates, two bomb-ketches, two fire-ships, two busses, one horse-ship, and fifty-five transports. On board this fleet were ten regiments of foot, two of marines, sixty light-horse, and a train of field artillery. There were no siege guns, nor was there any idea of a

regular siege. It was to be a surprise and an escalade. Scaling-ladders were supplied so constructed that thirty men could mount abreast, and a quantity of fascines ; and each transport was to be provided with ten boats carrying thirty men each, so that the entire force might be landed at once. This, however, was not done. The horses and baggage were to be shipped at Southampton ; the troops were encamped in the Isle of Wight. It was the unfortunate mistake about the carriage of these troops which caused the delay that proved, next to the premature alarm given by the appearance of the fleet, the most fatal cause of the failure.

Pitt and Anson had hoped that the expedition would have started by the middle, or at least the third week, of August. The fleet was ready, so also were the soldiers ; but the tonnage of the transports had been calculated on too small a scale ; and it was not till the 17th that Mr. Thames, the agent of transports, represented the fact to Sir John Mordaunt, who reports that he was much "puzzled" by his conversation. Hawke, however, was not puzzled, but writes to the Admiralty as follows :—

In transporting troops to and from Holland with a fortnight's water and provisions, and a short passage, one ton per man might be shifted with. But where troops are to be many weeks at sea men must have room to sit and lie under cover. In this case can it be imagined that a ship of four hundred tons burden could be capable of receiving four hundred men? Let there be deducted from her tonnage the room necessary for her proper crew, ballast, cables, and other stores, room for several months' provisions and water for the soldiers, for their arms, tent-poles, and other baggage ;—what remains can, on

be allowed for the reception of men. It was my duty to direct Mr. Thames to remonstrate on this subject to the Navy Board. Notwithstanding I was from the first determined, and am so still, to embark the troops in the best manner possible on board whatever number of transports shall be ordered.

A short letter from Pitt to Hawke of August 23rd, in which the admiral is ordered to take the soldiers whom the transports cannot accommodate, on board his men-of-war, crossed this letter. It had been preceded by an angry letter from the Admiralty complaining of the meddlesome agent, "one Mr. Thames, a person sent to Portsmouth by the Navy Board to assist the agent for transports in the embarkation of the troops," who has "raised unnecessary difficulties and uneasiness"; but it was accompanied by another letter from the same quarter announcing that the Admiralty had given way, and had ordered the required addition of transport-tonnage. The letter betrayed dissatisfaction, and Hawke replies to the Secretary on August 24th, in the following language:—

An expression at the end of your letter, I own, greatly astonishes me: "Their Lordships hope everything relating to the transports will be done to *your* satisfaction." I never was dissatisfied with any number appointed, and only thought it my duty for the public credit, as well as the private reputation of the Boards concerned, to give my opinion in a matter wherein some difficulty might have arisen when too late to be remedied. I meant it well; and as conviction is the best argument, I hope that discharge of my duty will not be construed to my disadvantage, since the Comptroller has thought fit to make so great an addition to the first tonnage. If such addition had not been, upon mature deliberation, thought absolutely necessary

by his superiors, or even himself alone, I cannot think it would have been done in complaisance to any private person's opinion. Besides, I beg it to be considered that the difficulty arose from a quarter where I had no immediate concern of my own; for, upon my honour, had the first transports arrived in time, the troops should have been embarked on board them in the best manner they could, without the least objection being made by me.

Next day he writes to Pitt that—

as a number of transports have been taken up at this port by the Comptroller of the Navy, and the "Jason" ship of war is fitted for the reception of soldiers, I hope there will be no occasion to put any on board the ships of war, which are already sufficiently weakened by having two battalions of raw, undisciplined men in their complements; but in case the transports should not be sufficient for the number of troops, I shall, in obedience to His Majesty's commands, accommodate the remainder on board the men-of-war.

Delays still occurred, not only from the transports originally ordered being behind time, but the equipment of the new ones could not take place in a moment; and this sadly tried the patience of all concerned. It is evident that the double organisation of the Admiralty and Navy Board worked ill, as it always did, down to the time of its abolition in the present century. What fate befell the too honest Mr. Thames we know not; but we may be sure that Hawke's resolution that the truth should reach headquarters sank deep.

By Monday, September 5th, the patience of the fiery Minister was exhausted, and the following letter to the two Commanders-in-Chief records the explosion:—

SIR,

The wind having been fair for the transports going to Spithead ever since Friday morning, I am to acquaint you that His Majesty expects with impatience to hear that the troops are embarked; but, if by any delay the embarkation should not be completed when this letter reaches you, I am to signify to you the King's pleasure that the most particular diligence be employed in getting the troops on board, and proceeding without the loss of a moment to the execution of your Orders and Instructions with regard to the expedition under your care. His Majesty having been informed that ten battalions under the orders of Sir John Ligonier were all completely embarked at Williamstadt within the course of twenty-four hours, in which they arrived at that place, the King expects to hear, by the return of this messenger, that the fleet under your command, with the troops on board, have proceeded to sea, in case the wind permits, agreeable to your Orders and Instructions. I am, Sir, with great truth and regard, your most obedient humble servant,

W. PITT.

P.S. - The messenger that carries this has my orders to stay to bring an account of the fleet's sailing.

This was dated at 4 p.m. Next day Hawke replies :—

At half-past five this morning I received by express your letter of the 5th inst., signifying His Majesty's directions to use the utmost diligence in embarking the troops and getting to sea. As I could not doubt of my letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty, by express on Sunday morning, being immediately communicated to you, I should have expected that before yours was sent His Majesty would have been fully satisfied that I needed no spur in the execution of his orders. As the wind was fair here on Saturday I ordered an officer [Lieutenant McKinley], with six cutters, out to cruise for the transports, with positive directions not to come-to at Spithead, but proceed directly to Cowes. Soon after they appeared in sight on Sunday morning I dispatched an officer to acquaint Sir John

Mordaunt with their arrival, that everything might be ready. As there was but little wind all day on Sunday but few of them reached Cowes that night, and, proving but little wind on Monday morning, I sent boats to tow the "Jason" down with two boats from each ship at Spithead, together with all the boats from the dock to assist in the embarkation. One brigade was embarked yesterday, as the other will be by noon to-day, so that the whole time taken up in the embarkation from the arrival of the transport to this day at noon will not exceed twenty-four hours, though we have not the advantage of jetty-heads [as at Williamstadt] from whence the troops could step into the transports. Besides, Sir, as they were detained so long in their passage round, they were in want of considerable quantities of provisions, which, to save time, I sent to Cowes after them, while I watered and victualled the horse-ships here ; the horse are embarked this morning. . . . Give me leave to add that the mortar was to be shipped on board the "Infernal" bomb-vessel ; she will be ready to-night. The men-of-war which came round with them were also in want of stores and some provisions. The squadron is now unmooring, and I only wait the return of the transports to Spithead when I shall take the first wind that offers to go to St. Helens', and if it should prove favourable shall go to sea immediately after. Be so kind, Sir, as to take the trouble to assure His Majesty that as I ever have, so more particularly on this occasion, I shall show the greatest regard to his orders.*

It was not, however, till September 10th that the expedition got fairly away. On September 8th Hawke reports from St. Helens' that—

a calm obliged me to anchor the squadron again. Yesterday at 4 in the morning I began to unmoor again, and sent an officer [Lieutenant McKinley] to Cowes to see none of the transports were left behind. About 3 in the afternoon I got to this place, and was obliged to come-to, as they could not get out, dispatching officers who were all night employed in ordering them to

* Paper XXVI., appended to Report of Court of Enquiry.

join me without loss of time. Last night arrived from the Downs a company of Lord Effingham's regiment, which had been embarked on board the "Norwich" at Chatham. The transports are all come down, and I am now under way with a moderate breeze at E.N.E.

On September 10th:—

On Thursday last, after I wrote to you, the wind died away, which obliged me to come-to again till half an hour past five; then a moderate breeze from W.N.W. springing up, I made the signal to weigh, and at 7 made sail with all the transports. On Friday we had contrary winds till evening, and this morning I was joined by H.M.S. "Essex," by whom I send this. We have now a fresh gale, with the wind at N.N.E.

Here ends the first part of the proceedings. The expedition had not left England till a fortnight before the equinox, and its destination was a roadstead in the Bay of Biscay. It has been necessary to account for the delay at some length, in order to show that no blame could possibly be attached to Hawke. The particular season of the year when the equipment was proceeding is always subject to uncertain weather, and to the weather, as well as the delay in the transport department, must be attributed the disappointment of Pitt's eager hopes. All the elements of action, human and superhuman, were to conform to those eager hopes; but they refused to conform. In calculating the work of the machine the necessary allowance for friction had not been made. It was too great an affair to be conceived in July, and executed in August. The tenth of September, under the circumstances of those times, was too late.

Some sense of this difficulty dawned upon the sanguine mind of the Minister soon after the squadron

had sailed. On September 15th he hurries off a despatch to catch the two commanders, modifying the order they had received as to their return by the end of September, and saying that they are—

> not to desist from the execution of their orders, or break up the same, merely and solely on account of the time limited for your return by the Instructions above mentioned, but that, notwithstanding the same, you do continue with the fleet, during such a farther number of days as may afford a competent time for the completion of any operation under the above circumstances.

This Order was received in good time, but was interpreted to require a return, if nothing of importance was to be undertaken, as near after the end of the month as possible, and no fault could be found with the final decision of the officers, taken under it, as so interpreted.

Wolfe, the Quartermaster-General, found his place on board the "Ramilies" with the two Commanders-in-Chief, and writes home that "Sir Edward Hawke seems determined to do everything that can be done upon this occasion consistent with his orders and instructions, and the safety of the fleet." *

It must be remembered that everything in relation to Rochefort had to be learnt for the first time; that there was nothing deserving the name of a chart of the narrow waters into which this great fleet was to penetrate, that no English pilots nor English seamen knew anything whatever about the navigation, and that the French pilots of the country were only to be trusted on the supposition that their Protestantism

* Wright's "Life of Wolfe," p. 381.

was a stronger guarantee for their good faith than their nationality. It was a sanguine supposition, but the principal one, Thierri, though ignorant enough, did certainly perform the duty he undertook, and received Hawke's encomium for the courage he displayed.

The delays, which were beyond the admiral's control, hampered the expedition to the last. Those of the voyage are best described in his letter to the Admiralty of September 29th. He was ordered to communicate both with that office and with Pitt himself. The despatch hitherto printed has been that of September 30th to the Minister, but though the two are identical from a certain point, the portion of the earlier one which here follows occurs in the first despatch alone.

"RAMILIES," Basque Roads,

SIR, September 29th, 1757.

From the time I wrote you last on the 13th instant [which letter is neither in the Hawke Letter-books nor Record Office] we had light breezes, for the most part contrary, with fogs and calms, which prevented our getting sight of the Isle of Rhé and Oleron till about noon of the 20th. I attempted to get into Basque Roads, and made the dispositions for attacking the Island of Aix with the Red Division, composed of the "Magnanime," "Barfleur," "Neptune," "Torbay," and "Royal William," with frigates, bomb-vessels, fire-ships, and cutters. Between 4 and 5 o'clock, and no probability of getting in that night, I made the "Magnanime's" signal [Capt. the Hon. Richard Howe], being the nearest ship, to chase a French ship of war of two decks in the south-east quarter. She was followed by the "Torbay" [Keppel], "Royal William," "Escort" [a sloop], "Coventry," and a cutter. Night coming on, they chased her as far as they could with safety into Bordeaux River, where t is reported she is aground. As these ships could not join the

squadron that night, not to lose sight of my principal object, I supplied their rooms in the Red Division with the "Dublin" "Burford," and "Achilles"; and at 7 in the morning of the 21st, made the signal for the vice-admiral [Knowles] to stand in, in order to attack the Isle of Aix. As he approached the entrance between the islands, the weather being a little hazy his pilot refused to carry the ship in, as did all the rest of the pilots of his division, which obliged him to tack and join me. About 11 the "Torbay," "Magnanime," "Royal William," and "Escort" joined company. At 3 p.m. the vice-admiral made sail with his division in a line ahead. But the wind blowing right out with a tide of ebb, we were obliged to come to anchor at 6. At 7 in the morning of the 22nd we weighed, but having little wind, came-to again at 12. At quarter after 3 weighed again, and spreading in a line ahead, got into Basque Roads at half after 9. About an hour before, I was joined by the "Viper" sloop with His Majesty's orders signified by Mr. Pitt, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, to finish any operations which might have been begun, after the principal object of his Instructions. With the tide of flood at 10 in the morning of the 23rd the vice-admiral weighed with his division in pursuance of my former order, and stood towards the Island of Aix, it being the general opinion that the troops could not be landed with safety till it should be first reduced.

Here the two despatches begin to correspond; and the rest may come in another place. When Wolfe, some months afterwards, wrote a caustic criticism of the conduct of the expedition to his friend, he remarked:—

I have found out that an admiral should endeavour to run into an enemy's port immediately after he appears before it; that he should anchor the transports and frigates as close as he can to the land, that he should reconnoitre and observe it as quick as possible, and lose no time in getting the troops on shore; that previous directions should be given in respect to landing the troops, and a proper disposition made for the boats

of all sorts, appointing leaders and fit persons for conducting the different divisions.

He then goes on to criticise the conduct of the generals with still more bitterness, but much more reason.* Elsewhere he says:—

We lost three days without, and three within. We were in sight of the Isle of Rhé September 20th, and it was the 23rd before we fired a gun. That afternoon and night slipped through our hands, the lucky moment of surprise and consternation among our enemies.†

The reader has now, for the first time, the opportunity of judging from Hawke's own pen how much value should be attached to the opinions of the young officer—afterwards to become so celebrated—sea-sick, as he confesses, on the voyage, ignorant of the true state of the case, and wise after the event. It was this sort of criticism that spread among the vulgar. Wolfe never meant it to be published. His evidence before the court-martial, which was not, however, very lucid, may be fairly held of itself to exculpate Hawke; and it is noticeable that he made no sort of objection, as quartermaster-general of the force, to the final relinquishment of the expedition. What he did was indeed characteristic. Disgusted with his military superiors, he offered, at an early stage of the proceedings, to attack Rochefort with three ships and 500 men. The extraordinary genius, then scarcely suspected, which he soon afterwards evinced, has led the world to conclude that he would have succeeded. Such a supposition, though of course possible, is en-

* Wright's "Wolfe," p. 397.
† *Ibid.*, p. 395.

tirely gratuitous. It could only have succeeded as a surprise, and though authorities differ as to the possibilities of a surprise, we must always remember that during next year an English spy was discovered, a physician, who had given intelligence to the French of the design upon Rochefort before the resolution of the Privy Council to attack it had been made known either to Hawke or Mordaunt.*

The incident of the chase of a French two-decker, mentioned above by Hawke, formed the subject of many a bitter joke at the expense of Admiral Knowles, in the midst of whose division of the fleet the ship had found herself, when she suddenly discovered it was not a French squadron, as she had supposed, and made the best of her way back. This admiral, who had formerly been reprimanded by a court-martial for not having given the Spaniards as sound a beating as it was thought he might have inflicted—(he and Sir Robert Calder are the only two admirals who have been tried by court-martial after a victory)—was the favourite scapegoat of the public for the failure of the Rochefort expedition, and it was not surprising. He was a clever and brave officer, but one of those talkative, turbulent men that the navy, as well as the army, occasionally breeds, and was always coming before the public in some form or other. Eventually he was knighted, and took service with Russia. Knowles, on the present occasion, was so intent on showing General Conway the orderly appearance of the crew of his ship at

* Entick's "History of the War," vol. iii. p. 82.

quarters between decks, that he not only did not detect the Frenchman, but took no notice of her for some time after she was reported; and to the delay of orders for a chase was attributed her escape, and the consequent alarm of the coast. As a matter of fact, however, the expedition was expected; no delay was caused by whatever happened on this occasion, and Hawke attributes no blame to the vice-admiral. In the general exasperation a great deal was evidently made out of a little. The public were perhaps nearer the mark when Knowles' subsequent conduct of the reconnaissance on Fort Fouras was made the subject of adverse criticism; but as one of the numerous pamphlets of the time said:

> Did Sir Edward Hawke complain of Mr. Knowles?—and if he did not, who can, without beginning at Sir Edward, whom even malice itself, never, that I could yet learn, charged with being either coward or fool.*

We may now resume Hawke's despatch:—

> The "Magnanime" led. About twelve the fire began from the fort with shells and great guns, and continued while our ships approached till about ten minutes after one, when the "Magnanime" brought up within less than forty yards of the fort, where she kept an incessant fire for about thirty-five minutes, as did the "Barfleur" [Graves], which brought up about five minutes after her abreast the fort. About three-quarters after one the firing ceased, the garrison having struck their colours and surrendered. They had in the fort eight mortars of about fourteen inches diameter, and thirty guns, sixteen of which were eighteen and the remainder about 14 pounders. The "Magnanime," though damaged in her

* "Considerations on the Proceedings of a General Court-Martial, &c., 1757.

rigging, yards, and masts, yet had only two soldiers killed and eleven men wounded.

On the morning of the 23rd I observed a French man-of-war over the land, to the S.E. of the Isle of Aix. Being desirous of destroying her, I directed Captain Byron, of the "America, to take with him the "Achilles" and "Pluto," fire-ships, and as soon as the Red Division should begin to batter, go and destroy her. But the French flung their guns overboard, cut their cables, and otherwise lightening her, ran up the Charente. It is said she was the "Prudent," of 74 guns, bound for Louisbourg.

It having been thought necessary, in order to secure a safe landing for the troops, to sound and reconnoitre the shore of the main, as soon as the fort had surrendered I directed Rear-Admiral Brodrick, with Captains Denis, Douglas, and Buckle, to perform that service and make their report to me. It was the afternoon of the 24th before they returned. A copy of that report accompanies this. After maturely considering it I was of opinion they might land, on which Sir John Mordaunt desired a Council of War might be assembled to consider of it. There it was granted by everybody that the landing could be effected. In confidence of their judgment and knowledge of their own profession we assented to their reasons for not proceeding to attempt taking Rochefort by escalade. A copy of the result of that Council of War is here enclosed. He desired a second, which was assembled early on the morning of the 28th. Herewith I send you the result of it. Immediately the disposition was made for the landing, under the direction of Rear-Admiral Brodrick and all the captains of the squadron. Part of the troops were actually in the boats, when I received a letter from Mr. Brodrick, a copy whereof I herewith transmit.

Last night I applied to him [Sir John Mordaunt] to know whether the general officers of the land forces had any further military operations to propose, that I might not unnecessarily detain the squadron here. This morning I received Sir John's answer, a copy of which is here enclosed. It was the daily expectation of their undertaking something which induced me to stay here so long. As I have now got their final resolution I shall sail for England to-morrow morning.

Though, before I came here, this place was represented as very difficult of access, and so narrow that ships could not lie in safety from the forts,—nay, the pilots made many baulks before we came in,—yet I find it a safe, spacious road, in which all the navy of England, merchant ships included, may ride without the least annoyance ; and that a squadron may at any time by lying here prevent any armament from Rochefort, and ruin all the French trade to Rhé, Oleron, or the Continent, within these islands.

I have ordered the "Burford," "Alcide," "America," "Dunkirk," "Coventry," "Postillion," "Béarn," "Pelican," "Cormorant," "Escort," and "Hawke" cutter to Plymouth to await their Lordships' orders. The rest I shall bring to Spithead with me.

[The above clause is absent in the despatch to Mr. Pitt.]

Their Lordships may be assured I have discharged my duty to my King and country with truth, diligence, and integrity : and wish more could have been done for the good of the service.

The pilot of the "Magnamine" has behaved like a man of bravery and skill, and as such I beg leave to recommend him to their Lordships.

Yours, &c.,
E. HAWKE.

Before quoting the documents referred to in this despatch, Hawke's private letter to Lord Anson of the same date, September 30th, must find its place here :—

"RAMILIES," in Basque Roads, off Rochelle,
MY LORD, September 30th, 1757.

The "Viper" sloop joined me within the entrance of this place just before we came to an anchor, Mr. Knowles' division having brought-to some little time before. I have kept her all this time flattering myself with the daily hopes that the land officers would come to a determination to land the troops, to try what was possible to be done for their country, notwithstanding they were of opinion it was impracticable to take the town of

Rochefort by escalade. If there is faith in man, my Lord, you may believe that I have urged this to them continually, painting the absolute necessity of it in the strongest terms that I could possibly think of. But I am infinitely concerned to tell your Lordship that you will see by the result that all this has availed nothing. I made no hesitation in attempting to remove every obstacle out of the way that was in my power, in which I happily succeeded, and wanted no Council of War, nor never would have had any if they had not been demanded to confirm me in opinion that it was right I should use my utmost endeavours for my King and country.

I have wrote the Admiralty as full an account of our proceedings as I can, but it is impossible to give your Lordship a thorough detail of the whole unless I had the honour of seeing you in person, and therefore shall be glad you will please to order me to have leave to go to town when I shall arrive at Spithead.

This is a much finer road than what the chart describes it to be, being much larger and more spacious, and where the whole fleet of England might lie upon occasion with great safety ; and now that we are acquainted with it, it is in our power, with a superior force, to prevent the enemy from making up their fleets here, which will lay them under infinite difficulties, and subject them to great hazard, it being always in our power, now that we know the place, to prevent any squadron, fitted at this port to join [from joining] that of Brest.*

Reading this private letter, written evidently in a hurry, and in the anguish of his heart, along with the letter of May 10th, 1758, which will come in its place, we may form some idea of what the admiral's feelings were in finding himself compelled to return home with such a miserable story to tell. It is needless to say that the thorough sifting to which the whole of the proceedings were subjected at the hands of two

* Anson Correspondence.

public courts (at one of which his own evidence was taken), as well as the war of excited literature which accompanied and followed those enquiries, failed to shake a particle of the plain, straightforward statement conveyed in the above despatch. It remains to fill in the blanks, and analyse the whole.

It may not be unnecessary to remark, before going farther, that Rochefort lies in an excellent position for defence, about nine miles up the River Charente, the mouth of which was fortified on the right bank by Fort de l'Aiguille, Fort Fouras, and Fort La Pointe ; and on the left by the fort on Isle Madame. The best defence of these forts is the intricacy of the navigation amongst the shoals caused by the deposits of the river ; and nine miles away from the forts stands the Island of Aix, which commands the entrance of these shoals, as well as the anchorage near the island, which is large enough for several ships. The Bay of Chatellaillon forms the coast line running to the northward from Fouras. Further away to the north, along the coast, is the Basque Road, a fine sheltered anchorage between the mainland and the Islands of Rhé, Oleron, and Aix. The great distance from this, which is the only safe anchorage for a fleet, to Aix, and the intricate passage to the mouth of the river, and still further, to the forts which guard the river's entrance, must be borne in mind by the reader. The Rochefort arsenal, like that of Toulon, was the creation of Louis XIV., inspired by the genius of Colbert.

The first point which demands attention is the capture of the fort on the Isle of Aix. One of the

common charges of the critics was that it had been unnecessary to detain the fleet and troops even for the few hours occupied by Howe and Graves in the attack. This was, however, open to great doubt. Such charts of the place as there were represented the fort as dominating the anchorage ; it was known to have been planned by Vauban, and supposed to be much stronger than it was ; and it is the first principle of war not to leave an enemy in the rear. As it happened, it had never been completed ; only six guns could be brought to bear on the ships ; and though Howe's approach to it was as gallant as everything done by that fine officer always was, the capture was a mere bagatelle. Unfortunately, the expedition was seriously discredited by the bad conduct of the crews of the ships which took the fort. They not only got furiously drunk, but ill-treated the priest and the chapel of the place. On the other hand, a good end was served by the capture, since it enabled the enterprising Wolfe, eagerly looking out for an opportunity, to get on shore and obtain a view of the forts higher up the estuary. What he saw he immediately reported, and thereupon proposed a plan of operations which must now be described. It is not mentioned in Hawke's despatch, since though at first approved by him, he soon saw that it must be abandoned. It may form a first stage in the consideration of the details before us.

Wolfe's plan was to make an immediate attack on Fort Fouras, along with a diversion to be effected by the bomb-ketches, which would open fire on Rochelle and the Isle of Rhé ; thus drawing off the attention of the enemy to places several miles from the real point of

attack. Both Hawke and Mordaunt approved of the proposal, at least as to Fouras; so also Conway, with the exception of the part relating to Rochelle, which he thought impracticable, and of which, as Hawke agreed with him, nothing more was heard. It is quite possible that Wolfe may have been right on this latter point, and the rest wrong; but we have no means of judging.

As to the attack projected against Fouras, it was Hawke's business to ascertain instantly if ships could get in near enough to make the attack; and Thierri, the pilot, who in the excitement of the moment of Howe's success, had offered to take the "Magnanime" up to Fouras, was examined by the admiral and vice-admiral on the morning of the 24th. Hawke described at the court-martial how he gave him time to allow his "gasconade to subside"; and then, on the statement of his belief that the "Barfleur," which drew less water than other line-of-battle ships, might, after being lightened, get near enough, Knowles was sent off to get her ready. Her captain, however, told Knowles that it would not be of much use, for she was aground already, at five miles distance from the fort; and, indeed, no sooner had Knowles gone, than the pilot altered his mind, and declared it impracticable to bring any ship within battering distance. This was afterwards proved to be true; it not being found possible to bring "even a bomb-ketch within random shot of the fort." On the whole Hawke pronounced him to be "very ignorant of the place." He had observed that even when he piloted the "Magnanime" up to the fort of Aix, "she sewed

in the mud." It was clearly impossible to order a landing at Fouras under such circumstances; and his only course was to have the whole shore examined by responsible officers. Here was a day lost; but who could be blamed? To Admiral Brodrick and three captains the task was that afternoon entrusted; but anyone can see by a glance at a common map that to take soundings, and ascertain the practicability of landing along so many miles of coast, could not, even by the most zealous officers, be accomplished very rapidly. It took the night and next morning. It was not till the afternoon of the 24th that Hawke received the rear-admiral's report that the Bay of Chatellaillon was the only proper landing place, and that though it had been impossible for them to land on account of the surf, yet in fine weather it would do perfectly well.

Hawke, we have seen, was now satisfied that his part of the work was done. A landing-place had been found; and he would see them all on shore next day without, as it was reported he told the generals, their having to wet their shoes. Mordaunt, however, having heard from Conway, who had examined several French prisoners at Aix, that Rochefort was not likely to be taken so easily as had been thought, considered this to be the occasion provided for in Pitt's Instructions, and now demanded a Council of War. Here opens the second stage of the proceedings.

Perhaps no English Council of War was ever brought before the public so often as this of September 25th. It will be unnecessary therefore to give more than its results. Hawke, in mentioning these

results, reports that "it was granted by everybody that the landing could be effected." This was his point. He would have risked the dangers of re-embarkation, and attempted at least a reconnaissance in force of the place they were sent to attack. To the generals the following arguments told in the opposite sense. They did not dispute that a landing might be effected; but they observed the danger of the coast (which was exposed to the whole force of westerly winds) if bad weather should come on after landing, and that the re-embarkation could not be assisted by the ships on account of the distance they must lie off shore. The evidence of Colonel Clarke seemed also to them, from the length of time which had elapsed since he visited the place, to be almost valueless. Some prisoners (much glorified by French historians for deceiving the English) declared that men had been working on the fortifications of Rochefort for several days past; some neutral vessels had reported that the enemy had been for some time in expectation of a descent; and the ditch, which they had been told was not a wet ditch, appeared from evidence to be capable of being made so. On the whole, considering

the long detention of the troops in the Isle of Wight, and our meeting with contrary winds, fogs, and calms upon our passage, the several informations received of troops assembled in the neighbourhood, and the great improbability of finding the place unprovided, or of surprising it, or consequently succeeding in an enterprise founded on the plan of an assault or escalade merely; and the uncertainty of a secure retreat for the troops if landed, the Council are unanimously of opinion that such an attempt is neither advisable nor practical.

This is signed by all the eight officers ordered by the "Instructions" to form the Council of War ; and of these eight, Hawke himself, the president, was one. It is remarkable that while this proceeding might naturally suggest a charge of inconsistency on his part, no remark seems to have been made upon it at the time. The next sentences of his despatch give his own explanation, which seems to have been always considered satisfactory :—

In confidence of their judgment and knowledge of their own profession we assented to their reasons for not proceeding to take Rochefort by escalade ;

or as he more fully expressed it in his evidence :—

Whether they should land or not land, he constantly thought it was the part of the generals to determine that question by themselves. He looked upon them as good and gallant officers, and officers of service ; and therefore could not but suppose they were infinitely better judges of their own business than he could be. In confidence of their abilities he acquiesced in their opinion of the impracticability of taking Rochefort by an escalade or storm ; however, though he assented to the not landing upon that footing, he did not give it as his opinion that the troops should not land at all for any other attempt which the general officers should find proper and expedient for their service ; on the contrary he then urged the necessity of doing something agreeable to the King's instructions.

If Wolfe had been a member of the Council he might have turned the scale the other way. In the letter above-mentioned he remarks that—

nothing is to be reckoned an obstacle to an undertaking of this nature which is not found to be so upon trial ; that in war something must be allowed to chance and fortune ; seeing that it is

in its nature hazardous, and an option of difficulties ; that the greatness of an object should come under consideration [as] opposed to the impediments that lie in the way; that the honour of one's country is to have some weight ; and that in particular circumstances and times the loss of a thousand men is rather an advantage to a nation than otherwise, seeing that gallant attempts raise its reputation and make it respectable ; whereas the contrary appearances sink the credit of a country, ruin the troops, and create infinite uneasiness and discontent at home.

And again :—

This famous Council sat from morning till late at night [it sat till midnight and its proceedings were not signed till next morning] ; and the result of the debates was unanimously not to attack the place they were ordered to attack, and for reasons that no soldier will allow to be sufficient.*

Like the criticism quoted above on the conduct of the admiral, this savours of extraordinary presumption ; but here the future hero knows much more of what he is talking about ; and the principles he lays down are not only sound as regards that, but for all such enterprises. However,—to obtain success in a blind enterprise, a genius must appear on the scene. The success of the escalade depended, as Mordaunt said, on a surprise, and the French were now as was abundantly proved, perfectly aware of the English movements. It must also be remembered that the application of the principle of ignorant impulse produced next year the catastrophe of St Cas ; and the expeditions against Louisbourg, in 1758, as well as of Quebec, in 1759, would probably have had the same result if a tolerably thorough knowledge

* Life, p. 397.

of both places had not been in the possession of the conquerors, and—we may say still further—if Wolfe himself had not in both cases been on the spot.

We have now advanced to a third stage in the proceedings. The feelings of the officers and men soldiers and sailors, in this great fleet of men-of-war and transports, when it got about that nothing was to be done, may be imagined without difficulty, and the general murmur could not fail to reach headquarters. Could not something be done? The uneasiness betrays itself in various ways. "It was my daily expectation of their undertaking something which induced me to stay here so long," says the admiral. The French prisoners were examined again, and some fresh information, thought to be more favourable to a landing at Chatellaillon, with a view to an attack on Fort Fouras, was obtained. Vice-Admiral Knowles was ordered to see whether the bomb-ketches could not get in near enough to be of use; Hawke sent Rodney to reconnoitre Oleron as a landing place,—on which he reported unfavourably; and various personal observations were made by the generals, including the ever active Wolfe. The result of all this effervescence was that Mordaunt, on the 27th, was induced to reconsider the question of landing, though not with any further idea of attacking Rochefort itself; and a second Council of War was, at his request, summoned for the 28th. It should be noticed that during this period of gestation the engineers had been fully employed in destroying the fort at Aix; but this could have been effected under the protection of half-a-dozen ships.

The second Council was a less tedious affair than the first, and, for some reason not explained, it seems to have been agreed that there should be no regular minutes taken of the proceedings. Nevertheless Hawke, as president, had minutes taken by his secretary for his own guidance, and forwarded a copy of them with his despatch. Unfortunately, not having been signed by the other members, they are unauthentic; but their substantial accuracy was not impugned, nor was the following passage disputed :—

Sir Edward Hawke, appealing to every member of the Council for the truth of what he said, declared that he was now of the same opinion which he had given both before and at the Council of War of the 25th, that the landing could be effected ; that the troops ought to be landed for some further attempt, which was alone matter of consideration with the general officers of the troops, he not taking upon him to be a judge of land operations, but would, from his confidence in their abilities and skill in their own profession, readily assent to any resolution they should come to, and assist them to the utmost of his power.

The naval members then withdrew ; and on their afterwards joining the military members, it was unanimously agreed to land the troops "at Chatellaillion Bay that very night, and make a sudden attack with the land forces upon Fouras and the other forts leading to, and upon the mouth of, the River Charente."

"Immediately," says Hawke, "the disposition was made for the landing under the direction of Rear-Admiral Brodrick and all the captains of the squadron. Part of the troops were actually in the boats when I received a letter from Mr. Brodrick, a copy of which I herewith transmit."

The letter is as follows:—

SIR,

I have prepared all the boats with proper officers to land the troops, agreeable to your order; but am to acquaint you that the generals are come to the resolution not to land to-night, and to wait till daylight, when they can have a full view of the ground where they are to land.

I am Sir, yours, &c.,

"Achilles," Tuesday morning; 1 o'clock. THOMAS BRODRICK

On the other hand Sir John Mordaunt describes the affair thus:—

The necessary orders were immediately given; and about one o'clock the Grenadiers and great part of the troops who were to land with me in the first embarkation were on board [the boats]; when a strong wind blowing from the shore, the officers of the navy appointed to conduct the landing represented that it was with difficulty the long-boats could make way that it would be day before the first embarkation could get to shore; and that it would be five or six hours more before the troops first landed could be supported by a second embarkation. Add to this that the boats belonging to the transports would scarce be able to get on shore at all. For these reasons the generals found the forces could not be landed that night.*

The discrepancy between these two accounts was much commented upon. The army and navy seemed to throw the blame on one another; and it was unfortunate that Brodrick did not say that he concurred with the generals,—for there was no blame to be attached to anyone. The wind, as the evidence before the court showed, was much too high to land; and of this we may be sure, for no one was more

* Evidence at the Court of Enquiry.

strongly of that opinion than the intrepid Howe. The fact evidently is that admirals, generals, and captains were agreed, and were all quite right. If the generals were responsible for the final resolution, it was because the naval officers recommended it. It was an exposed and dangerous coast. No one could command the winds, which combined with many other causes in producing the total failure of the expedition.

It may be added to this summary of the final effort "to do something" that Hawke, in his evidence before the court-martial on Mordaunt, stated that his own plan of sending in the transports on the afternoon of the day on which the Council was held, "as close to the shore as they could possibly go, and the frigates within them, at the place where the troops were to land, that they might get on shore with the greater expedition," though seconded by all the sea-officers, was objected to by the military members, and especially by Conway, as "it would point out to the French the place at which they intended to land." Thus the public rightly judged that the plans of the naval officers never having been tried, it was not they who could be accused of failure. The military objection was unsound: for there was now no chance of any surprise, and the distance at which the transports lay was too great for boat-work, as it turned out. Hawke, when he found the attack in the early morning was preferred, gave personally some excellent orders to the transports for facilitating the landing of the second detachment of troops. To do this, they were, at the instant the first body of troops was gone from

the ships, to get under sail immediately, and run close into the shore where the troops were to land." However, none of these things came to pass, and are only interesting as they throw light on a complicated series of events.

The fourth and final stage comprises the several steps which led to the departure of the fleet for England on the 30th. On the 29th, instead of making any further arrangements for landing the troops—which had returned to their transports full of indignation at having been kept four hours in the boats, during a windy night, without the chance of striking a blow—General Conway was employed with Colonels Wolfe and Clarke in a further reconnaissance of the coast from Fouras to Chatellaillon. The generals had received information, or rather "it had been reported," that "some camps and entrenchments had been seen on the shore, particularly near the place where the landing was to have been made." Conway reported to Mordaunt and the two other head-officers of the Council that he was still in favour of attempting a landing; but here he was unable to carry his three colleagues with him. Cornwallis had been steadily all through against any landing at all, and admitted that he only signed the Resolution of the 28th against his own judgment. Colonel Howard had been much of the same opinion. Sir John Mordaunt had been hitherto more guided by Conway than by anyone else, and even now offered to go on, if Conway thought he ought to give way. He had been summoned by Hawke to make up his mind on the morning of the 29th in the following terms:—

"RAMILIES," Basque Road,
29th Sept., 1757.

SIR,

Should the general officers of the troops have no farther military operation to propose, considerable enough to authorise my detaining the squadron under my command longer here, I beg leave to acquaint you that I intend to proceed with it for England without loss of time.

I am, Sir, &c.,
ED. HAWKE.

With this letter and Conway's report before them, all four agreed to give up the whole expedition. Conway, though he had expressed his opinion in favour of further action, declining to press it, joined the rest; and the following letter was the result:—

SIR,

Upon receipt of your letter I talked it over with the other land-officers who were of our Council of War, and we all agree in returning directly to England.

I am, Sir, &c.,
J. MORDAUNT.

There is a suggestive abruptness in this final correspondence. Though there is no want of proper politeness, the relations between the army and navy had evidently become much strained. Mordaunt stated to the court that he applied to Sir Edward for a Council of War to consider the first of the above letters; but—

he declined it, and said that seamen were no judges of land operations, which were to be performed by the troops on shore. In consequence of this conversation I summoned all the land officers who had been of the Council of War and laid Sir Edward Hawke's letter before them. We considered the uncertainty of landing, if the wind should blow as it had done the night before and the account we had that day received from the captain of

the "Viper" sloop, who had informed Colonel Howard that he had seen a considerable body of troops near the landing-place, whose numbers he did not exactly know, but he had observed five pair of colours ; that he saw them in camp ; that the next morning the view of the camp was interrupted, so that he could not see them again, which he attributed to their having thrown up some ground on the beach ; and that he saw the sandhills on the beach considerably higher than they were on Sunday when we came there. Colonel Howard, on his return from reconnoitring, reported this to me.

It further appeared to us that the attempt upon those forts at this time could not justify the ill consequences of detaining the fleet in that bay at a time when, from what we had learnt from the conversation of the sea-officers, two great French fleets were expected home ; that at this season of the year, so near the Equinox, such westerly winds were to be apprehended as might detain the fleet there many weeks ; that the foundation upon which the Resolution of the Council of War upon the 28th was taken was that it might be done during the necessary detention of the fleet in the demolition of the Fort of Aix, and thereupon was directed to be done with all possible dispatch ; that the demolition of the works of the Isle of Aix was completed that very day, and that the wind was then fair for the fleet to return ; add to this that the time limited by His Majesty's Instructions was now expired, and that the time was not prolonged by Mr. Pitt's letter, which allowed us only to complete such operations as we had already begun.

On the receipt of the laconic reply sent by the generals, the fleet at once set sail for England ; and moored at Spithead on October 7th. It was a most inglorious return. It is said that the arrival of the fleet was greeted by "a dumb peal" from the church bells of Portsmouth. This must have been far from agreeable to the Member for that place. But all were alike. The whole country was in a blaze. Were they never to obtain a return for the money they

lavished upon sailors and soldiers? It was ardently hoped that this grand expedition would have wiped out the dreadful memory of the loss of Minorca. It had made matters worse. Entick, the historian of the war, reports that—

> the greater part of the nation vented resentment on the commanders . . . another far less numerous part, did justice to their good intentions, but questioned whether the projectors had sufficient ground of knowledge or information to warrant the undertaking. Some, merely guided by private attachment . . extolled it to the skies; others, envious of Pitt, affected to treat the whole plan as chimerical, crude, and undigested, both in the projection and appointment of the execution . . some over-refined politicians pretended to discover a connection with the Convention of Stade.*

Of the numerous effusions in which the popular feeling found expression, perhaps the most just and least scurrilous was the following, from the "Gentleman's Magazine":—

> "We went, we saw, were seen, like valiant men
> Sailed up the bay, and then,—sailed back again."

It cannot be said that Hawke suffered seriously in public estimation even on the first blush of the affair, but his feelings were none the less wounded. The generals were the real sufferers, and the King, who had never approved of the expedition, but had allowed Pitt to have his way, represented the national feeling when, the admiral and general having been sent for to Court, he gave Hawke a reception as markedly gracious as that of Mor-

* Vol. ii. p. 346.

daunt was the contrary. This was, however, to settle the question a little too summarily. Mordaunt's character stood high, and the feeling of the army at least was that he ought to be allowed to clear himself and his colleagues. The remainder of the year was taken up by the court of enquiry which was opened on November 1st, and by the subsequent court-martial on Mordaunt to which it led. Hawke was, happily for himself, out of the way of the general hubbub, for he was sent off with the fleet to watch for the return of M. Dubois de la Mothe, and did not come back till the evidence before the court-martial was closed. However, the court was reopened on December 20th in order to hear his evidence, the substance of which has been given above. It will be sufficient here to state the conclusions at which both courts arrived, and then to sum up the whole.

The court of enquiry consisted of the Duke of Marlborough, Lord George Sackville, and General Waldegrave. Their report has been blamed for its vague and unsatisfactory character; but somewhat unjustly. It is sufficiently clear on the point that Rochefort ought to have been attacked, and that the Council of War which decided against that operation on September 25th was the cause of the whole failure. Nothing else, they thought, was of any real consequence. Being generals they naturally reflected by implication on the sea-officers for not having joined in the final Council demanded by Mordaunt, and declined by Hawke; but they laid no stress on it. The court evidently considered the whole matter one which ought to go further; and in the agitated

state of the nation, with so many uncertainties attaching to the proceedings, and so many suspicions that political intrigue had affected them, it was quite right that the whole matter should be thoroughly sifted, with all the advantages that a court-martial has over the court which precedes it. The only point in the evidence requiring remark in reference to Hawke, who was not there to explain, is the production of his private minutes of the Council of War of the 28th. This was angrily referred to by the other members of the Council of War; but as it turned out that Mordaunt had been asked to produce his minutes, and not having taken any, had applied to Hawke for a copy of his, which the general had sent up without remark, and as no fault of the slightest importance was found with them, the incident is not worth further notice. What came out both before this court, and more fully before the court-martial, was that Hawke, previously to September 25th, at the Council held on that day, and on that of the 28th, when he at last brought the Council to agree with him, had always, throughout, given his opinion that "the landing could be effected," and that he had urged it all along.

But it did not follow that Mordaunt could be found guilty by a court-martial. On the contrary, when the evidence had all been retaken, with much additional matter, after Pitt and, at the last moment, Hawke, had been examined, and every instruction and order had been thoroughly weighed, the court had evidently no choice but to acquit the general; and he was accordingly "honourably acquitted."

Campbell in his "Lives of the Admirals"* here remarks:—

> The Minister and the admiral were also acquitted by the general voice of the people; so that this grand expedition miscarried without a cause.

The historian's bitter verdict is only too near the mark. Mordaunt had no difficulty in proving that he had acted in strict conformity with his instructions, and that where he had been left to his own responsibility he acted to the best of his judgment. Nor was there any sufficiently strong ground for disputing the conclusions to which he had come. It was perfectly open for a brave and prudent man to take either view. Nothing but success could have justified a movement such as Hawke and Wolfe would have made. There were reasons enough, of a certain kind, against it.

"The surprise," as Mordaunt's defenders said, "on which depended the only chance of making a vigorous impression, or a *coup de main*, was evidently over; and as to sitting down before it, we had no artillery: our plan admitted of none. Sir Edward Hawke, who was so far from giving his opinion that the troops should not land at all, that he urged the necessity of it, was, however, satisfied that Fort Fouras was become of no consequence to troops landing in Chatellaillon Bay; and as no other object appeared worth landing for, either to Sir Edward Hawke, who wished it so much, or to the other commanders, what could they do but come away?—for as to Rochefort, all of them had concurred in the opinion of its being not to be thought of more. . . . Surely the little or nothing that obviously remained to be done against Fouras was not an object for keeping the fleet longer upon that coast. It could

* Vol. iv. p. 104.

not be worse to set it at liberty to proceed on important and real services than to detain it in fruitless attendance on an imaginary one.*

It is not easy to dispute this reasoning, nor was it satisfactorily met in a single pamphlet of the day. The country was at least saved from the disgrace of another "judicial murder"; and Pitt was too great a favourite with the people to be saddled with the failure as Newcastle and Anson had been in the case of Byng. Nevertheless, the court-martial had treated the original plan of the expedition with contempt; a very large body of opinion was formed against the Minister; and the preceding remarks have shown that, though we might hesitate to accept the opinion of his political enemies, the impartial voice of history cannot by any means acquit him.

There were many "ifs" in the matter. If Mordaunt had been an able and energetic man, if Conway's good qualities had not been eclipsed by a fatal and very characteristic indecision, if even Cornwallis and Howard had been anything but commonplace men, if Wolfe had been one of the Council of War, instead of merely quartermaster-general,—still more, if he had been in command, the matter would have been placed beyond doubt in one way or the other. As the French were prepared, there would doubtless have been heavy losses; and changes of wind and weather might have caused a catastrophe like that of St. Cas, while nothing of any importance might have been achieved; but on the other hand, it is quite

* "Considerations on the Proceedings of a General Court-Martial," &c., p. 73.

possible that audacity might have prevailed, something might have been gained in the way of information from a powerful reconnaissance, prisoners might have been taken, forts destroyed, and an alarm raised all over France.

This is the risk Pitt meant to be incurred; it is what Hawke earnestly advocated. But it was an immense risk.* While some held that the Minister ought to be very grateful to the generals for not having, in the absence of any certain information of any sort, "sacrificed so many valuable lives to an opinion of his, perhaps too lightly taken up," and warned him against becoming intoxicated with power like Alberoni, and falling under condemnation as a hare-brained plotter of silly enterprises like that charlatan, others attributed the failure to the want of zeal of the naval, as well as the incapacity of the military chiefs.

The sea-officers had been tempted with wealth instead of reputation, and we have substituted avarice for honour. We have at this hour many who would make brave and excellent corsairs, and I hope that in the long list we have two or three good admirals.†

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* In Bubb Doddington's "Memoirs" that clever politician declares that it had become known from indisputable evidence that the enemy "had 7,000 or 8,000 men at Rochefort at the least, that there were 3,500 men behind the sand-banks, and there was a masked battery at each end. That if we had landed when we first appeared we should have embarrassed them; but they thought themselves betrayed when they found we did not land at the time we attempted it" (p. 401). This seems also to be the view of the matter taken by the best French historians, such as M. Martin.

† "The Expedition against Rochefort fully stated, &c.: by a Country Gentleman," 1758.

This reflection on the Royal Navy was certainly undeserved. Hawke's whole career was a protest against it ; and neither Knowles, Brodrick, nor Rodney could be thought to lie under such an odious charge ; but the popular indignation must vent itself somewhere. Pitt was its representative ; and he was too angry to perceive that he was lowering himself by condescending to speak, at the opening of Parliament, as follows :—

He declared solemnly that his belief was that there was a determined resolution, both in the naval and military commanders, against any vigorous exertion of the national power. He affirmed that though his Majesty appeared ready to embrace every measure proposed by his Ministers for the honour and interest of his British dominions, yet scarce a man could be ound with whom the execution of any one plan in which there was the least appearance of danger, could with confidence be trusted. . . . Nor was it among the officers alone that indolence and neglect appeared ; those who filled the other departments of military service seemed to be affected with the same indifference. The victuallers, contractors, purveyors, were never to be found but upon occasions of their own personal advantage. In conversation they appeared totally ignorant of their own business. The extent of their knowledge went only to the making of false accounts ; in that science they were adepts.*

Yet, shamefully exaggerated and unjust as this language was, it is beyond doubt that it had a useful effect. The whole country felt the whip and spur of this imperious rider, and whatever may be our opinion on the spirit with which the navy at least

* MS. report of speech in "Anecdotes of the Life of the Rt. Hon. W. Pitt, Earl of Chatham, &c., with Speeches in Parliament, &c., 1792," vol. i. p. 168.

might have acted, whether lashed by the whip or not, when it had a fair chance, there is no doubt that it did soon begin to perform wonders, and that the army, led by the new men whom Pitt selected from the junior ranks, was not a whit behindhand.

Perhaps the best illustration of the bewildered confusion produced in men's minds by the return of the Rochefort Expedition without effecting anything, is the conviction which so largely prevailed that it was an act of treachery, either on the part of Pitt himself, or of some other members of the Government. Newcastle, of course, was grievously suspected ; some even hinted that the King had a hand in it. Two disasters had come very close on each other's heels. The Duke of Cumberland, overweighted and outgeneralled by the French under Marshal Richelieu, had been all but driven into the sea, and forced (on September 8th) to sign the Convention of Stade or Closter-seven. There was, in fact, just time for the news to have reached Basque Roads at the critical moment when the decision to do nothing was arrived at ; and people not knowing what to believe, insisted that Mordaunt had received secret orders to this effect, with a view to obtaining better terms from the French for Hanover. In the "Chatham Correspondence" are several such letters. Mr. Potter, M.P., reports to Pitt that the people of Bristol and the west country are unanimous in this belief. Horace Walpole tells General Conway that the city of London is equally convinced. Lord Chesterfield, on November 4th, tells his son :—

In all these complicated machines there are so many wheels within wheels that it is always difficult, and sometimes impos-

sible, to guess which of them gives direction to the whole. Mr Pitt is convinced that the principal wheel, or, if you will, spoke in the wheel, came from Stade.*

Thus, while Pitt is himself suspected, he suspects others. Men were absurdly suspicious all round, as they often are when anything strange or unaccountable happens. But by the light of such a simple narrative of events as has been here presented, we can see our way without recourse to a magic lantern.

That, in the opinion of the King, Hawke came well out of the affair, whatever Pitt might think, not only on his arrival, but after the court-martial was over, is proved both by his continuous employment, and by the following letter: —

THURSDAY, December 22nd, 1757.

Lord Anson sends his compliments to Sir Edward Hawke, and the King having asked yesterday whether Sir Edward was in town, his lordship is of opinion he should go to Court this morning and be presented to the King at his Levee.†

The nation had also made up its mind. Its confidence in Hawke was unshaken. He was still at the head of the active forces of the navy ; he had acted with his usual self-command in keeping silence while the storm was raging; and though shattered in health by all he had gone through, and about to be still more tried than ever, was really now on the point of completing his fine career with glory.

Pitt himself was also about to emerge out of the sea of difficulties in which he found himself in the autumn of the year 1757. The brightest day suc-

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. i. p. 279.

† Hawke Papers.

ceeds the darkest night. Light dawned from Prussia. The victory of Rossbach on November 5th—"another Protestant victory on a Protestant day"—turned the tide; and the King at last discovering the merits of his Minister, Pitt was now able to throw over the opposition in the Cabinet which had hampered him for the first few months of his Administration. Taking every department of the State into his own hands, he was in a position to apply, without let or hindrance, the whole resources of the country as he thought best. Frederick's consummate generalship crowned his fortunes. The splendid battle of Lissa (or Leuthen) on December 5th completed the work of Rossbach; the French, the Russians, and the Swedes were simultaneously expelled from their previous conquests before Christmas; and the Hanoverian army which had capitulated at Closter-seven was set free by the action of the French themselves, who, in the pride of their success, broke the conditions they had imposed. All was now prepared for the onward movements which characterised the years 1758 and 1759, and decided the issue of the war.

It was not the failure at Rochefort alone that had cast such a gloom over the nation, and at the same time steadied its resolution to insist on Pitt's being entrusted with a full Dictatorship. Affairs in America had gone from bad to worse during this miserable year—perhaps the most distressing of the whole war. Montcalm's success in the capture of Fort William Henry was accompanied by details of shocking barbarity. Lord Loudoun and Admiral Holburne had performed as little with their fleet and army towards

the capture of Louisbourg, for which they had been sent out in the summer, as the generals had done at Rochefort. Like the expedition against the latter place, theirs had been despatched too late in the year, and without sufficient information as to the strength of the enemy ; and Holburne, as has been said, had sustained the additional misfortune of encountering a hurricane which disabled the English ships, and allowed the French to slip back to Brest. The admiral could hardly be accused of raising the gale, but the people, persuaded that he ought to have done more beforehand, visited the disaster on his reputation. In India the terrible catastrophe of the Black Hole of Calcutta left a mark which the brilliant success of Clive had by no means been sufficient to erase. The Spaniards continued to insult the British flag. The fortunes of Frederick had fallen so low that he was on the point of committing suicide.

Who could have believed that after six pitched battles in one year, this wonderful man, with his diminutive force, would before the year was ended rise superior to the most crushing defeats, and hurl back the united forces of the whole Continent? His spirit infused itself into the English mind. A vista of triumph revealed itself through the clouds ; with British troops and British gold to support the gallant Frederick, it was seen that he might be trusted to keep the whole strength of France at bay ; while with Pitt supreme, and the herd of Newcastles and placemen of every hue at his feet, some methods might be found by which the failures and disgraces

of the past might be retrieved, and the real superiority of the English at sea be asserted without dispute. The Royal Navy was but a weapon. It could not handle itself. Let it be directed for once by the hand of a master. The army had fallen low, even in its own estimation. Let it learn its work under Frederick and his generals. It would soon win back its old fame.

CHAPTER VII.

HAWKE'S SHARE IN THE DESCENTS ON FRANCE IN 1758.

THE year in which the gloom of despondency was to change into the bright glow of hope and confidence cannot be introduced better than by the Royal Speech composed by Pitt, and pronounced at the opening of the autumn session on December 1st, 1757. That session had been delayed several days in consequence of the Battle of Rossbach. Pitt felt that so great a victory offered an occasion for a new departure, and the old speech, drawn up on the lines suggested by the former state of affairs, was flung into the fire. The recent failures were to be passed over as mere "disappointments," and a spirit of buoyant hope and determined resolution might now, without exciting opposition or ridicule, connect itself with "the magnanimity and active zeal of my good brother and ally the King of Prussia."

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

It would have given me the greatest pleasure to have acquainted you, at the opening of this session, that our success in carrying on the war had been equal to the justice of our cause and the extent and vigour of the measures formed for that purpose.

I have the firmest confidence that the spirit and bravery of

this nation, so renowned in all times, and which have formerly surmounted so many difficulties, are not to be abated by some disappointments. These, I trust, by the blessing of God, and your zeal and ardour for my honour and the welfare of your country, may be retrieved. It is my fixed resolution to apply my utmost efforts for the security of my kingdoms, and for the recovery and protection of the possessions and rights of my crown and subjects in America and elsewhere, as well by the strongest exertion of our naval force as by all other methods. Another great object which I have at heart is the preservation of the Protestant religion and the liberties of Europe ; and in that view to adhere to and encourage my allies.

For this cause I shall decline no inconveniences ; and in this cause I earnestly desire your hearty concurrence and vigorous assistance. The late signal success in Germany has given a happy turn to affairs which it is incumbent upon us to improve ; and in this critical conjuncture the eyes of all Europe are upon you. In particular I must recommend it to you that my good brother and ally, the King of Prussia, may be supported in such a manner as his magnanimity and active zeal for the common cause deserve.

Both Houses reciprocated these sentiments with the greatest enthusiasm ; and supplies, gigantic for those times, were no sooner asked for than obtained. Money, in fact, the nation could well afford, in spite of its losses ; for in proportion as the trade of France had suffered from the war that of England had increased. Thus the sources from which the immense expenses of the French for war and subsidies to their allies were drawn, rapidly diminished, and loans could only be obtained at an exceedingly high rate of interest ; while the English could borrow at a very low rate, and were making profits which lightened the incidence of taxation. It was neither money, nor men, nor material that were lacking, only the skill to use them.

Pitt's first and immediate care was to prevent the French from transmitting reinforcements to America, whither he was about to send a large force. Admiral Osborn was charged with the blockade of the French fleet at Toulon which was assembling for the above purpose; and though no general action was fought, some actions of single ships under his command were completely successful in putting an end to any movement from that quarter. That especially of Captain Gardiner, of the "Monmouth," who was killed in the capture of the "Foudroyant," a ship of about double his own force, deserves mention. On February 19th the squadron destined to retrieve the previous failure at Louisbourg started, under the command of Boscawen, with whom Amherst was immediately afterwards associated, and with Wolfe as one of the brigadiers-general under him. The choice of these officers was excellent in all respects. Boscawen had last been employed under Hawke in the Channel fleet which had been sent out, immediately on its return from the Basque Roads, to look for M. Dubois de la Mothe, and had been driven into port by the gale which brought the French into Brest. If Walpole is to be believed he had declined to serve under Hawke on the previous expedition; * and though he thus escaped the unpopularity attending its failure, was, or fancied himself, in disgrace at headquarters on that and some other accounts.† But this could not have been

* "Letters to Mann," vol. iii. p. 24.

† Among the family papers is the following letter from Anson to Hawke, soon after his return from Basque Roads:—

serious, as he was still a Lord of the Admiralty ; and Pitt knew what he was about in entrusting him with the command of an expedition of such importance at a critical moment. It was suited to his talents for combined warfare, and Pitt used to say of him that "Boscawen never made difficulties." Jeffery Amherst had been but slightly known as yet, and was below the rank from which the selection would naturally have been made ; but Pitt had marked his man.

To Wolfe also, from having observed the contrast between him and the other military officers at Rochefort, he now gave the first opportunity in his power to distinguish himself. The highest concord prevailed amongst the chiefs ; and though great risk was incurred in landing the troops, amidst difficulties which were only overcome by Wolfe's gallant personal conduct, the operations of the English arms moved steadily on to the brilliant success which was achieved on July 26th. This success was the more encouraging to the Minister and people because Cape Breton had

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DEAR SIR, ADMIRALTY, the 19th of October, 1757.

Vice-Admiral Boscawen's great uneasiness at not being employed at this time when there is an object in view, has determined the sending him out under your command. I know the delay this must occasion, which must be disagreeable to you, but he determines to be down with you at Portsmouth soon enough for you to sail on Friday morning. I could say to you much if I had you here *tête-à-tête*, but Knowles' imprudence always hurts him, and he has enemies enough to seize every occasion that offers. I have always wished him well with all his indiscretion. His busy spirit constantly draws him into difficulties. I think Admiral Boscawen comes to you with a disposition to be agreeable to you, and I can only say for my own part that no man can wish you more success, nor is more your friend than, your obliged and affectionate, humble servant,

ANSON.

been so long a cause of grievous distress to the Anglo-American Colonists, and because the capture of an island which had, since the beginning of this later war, baffled every effort of the Government, was justly accepted as an earnest of a turn of fortune in reference to the other plans of the campaign.

So entirely has the importance of this place now receded into the background that it requires an effort to understand why the success of Boscawen and Amherst should have been thought worthy of the solemn thanks of Parliament, and why the captured colours of the enemy should have been paraded through the streets of London, as if the occasion had been comparable with the great victories on which such demonstrations have seemed appropriate. But our sketch has already embraced the conquest of the island by Warren and the American Colonists, the surrender of it, with hostages, as the shameful price of the Peace of Aix la Chapelle, the vast pains and treasure subsequently spent by the French on the fortifications of Louisbourg, and their resolution to make it more than ever the key to French America; as also the failures of the years 1755, 1756, and 1757, either to prevent reinforcements from being poured into it, or even to attempt its siege. It was in this sense that the Speaker, in addressing Boscawen, declared himself unable to "enumerate and set forth the great and extensive advantages accruing to this nation from the conquest of Louisbourg with the islands of Cape Breton and St. John." The place had been not only the sole harbour for the large ships of the French, but the centre of the whole of their

privateering system which had broken up the colonial trade; nor were their lucrative fisheries of any value without it.* It was but an accidental addition to the importance of the capture on these grounds, that six line-of-battle ships and four frigates had been taken along with the place. Both sides of the entrance to the St. Lawrence being now permanently in British hands, the French colony of Canada became perilously insecure, and Wolfe lost no time in putting his plans for the capture of Quebec before the Minister.

With the third part of Pitt's scheme, Hawke, who on February 28th had hoisted his flag on board the "Ramilies," in command of the Channel squadron, was entrusted. It was intended that the French ships captured by Osborn's squadron, or still blockaded at Cartagena, should have joined the squadron fitting out at Rochefort, and together they were to have sailed for the relief of Louisbourg before Boscawen could take it. Pitt destined Hawke for the service of dealing with this latter force, and obtained information at the end of February that although it could no longer expect the reinforcements from the Mediterranean, it was all but ready to start unsupported—so urgent was the peril of Louisbourg. It

* For a very interesting, and on the whole just, view of this subject see a Pamphlet by "Massachusettensis," entitled "The importance of Cape Breton considered in a Letter to a Member of Parliament, from an Inhabitant of New England: London: Dodsley: 1746." This is in the All Souls' and probably other libraries. Few papers convey a more accurate description of contemporary opinion on the colonia questions disputed between Great Britain and France in the last century.

may well be imagined that the admiral was not displeased at being ordered on special service to a place where he had suffered so much distress ; and this time without the incumbrance of land-officers and councils of war. It would not be his fault if the expedition failed. Nor, as far as was known at that time or since, did it in any degree fail. The destruction of the French armament against which Hawke was sent seemed to the public complete ; or if not, no one ever hinted that he could have made it more complete. There was a sort of regret that the enemy would not stay to be beaten ; but that was all. No squadron, no troops ever left Rochefort for America. Nevertheless, the incidents of this affair were painful to our admiral in the greatest degree ; and his correspondence with the Admiralty throws a light upon his character and services with which we cannot afford to dispense.

Some letters of Hawke's, written shortly before starting on this expedition, should be previously noticed, since they illustrate his constant desire to improve the condition of the seamen. When men were discharged from ships as unserviceable, from disease or wounds, there were no existing forms under which they could receive their pay up to the date of discharge. " They have consequently nothing to subsist them on their way home. Numbers have been, and still are in the same situation, whose case I hope their Lordships will take into consideration. Their being reduced to beg through all parts of the kingdom deters men from entering into the service, and has induced me seriously to consider of a remedy

I therefore beg leave to submit what follows to their Lordships' consideration." The plan which he proposes is simple enough, and seems to have been adopted; but observing the date of this interference, and that of the quarrel with the Admiralty which now commences, one may suspect some connection. We may remember that the remonstrances about the pressed men and the bad beer were closely connected with the painful correspondence of 1755.

On March 12th the admiral sails to blockade the Rochefort armament, with seven ships of the line and three frigates, but with no smaller vessels, such as were necessary for operations in shoal water. This was the grievance. The terms of the letter, which will follow presently, show how deeply he felt it. "Last cruise," referring to this one, "I went out on a particular service, almost without the least means of performing it." There is indeed no letter to show that he had asked for these vessels, and been refused; but it could hardly have been otherwise; many letters are missing; and the expression in his despatch of April 11th: "I could not help regretting the want of fire-ships and bomb-vessels," is decisive. On April 5th, having received information from England that the French squadron was on the point of starting, he suddenly dashes into the midst of it, and reports the result on April 11th, by which day he had returned to Plymouth. Premising that he found lying off the Isle of Aix five line-of-battle ships, six or seven frigates, and forty merchant ships, which, he reports in a second despatch, had 3,000 troops on board, he goes on to say:—

At half-past four, made signal for a general chase to S.E., but took care to preserve the line by verbal orders to the ships astern of me. At five, the enemy began to cut or slip, and soon to run in great confusion. At six, their commodore, who remained last, made off, when we were within about gunshot and a half. Many of those who fled first were by this time aground on the mud. . . . It was now too dark to do anything but to take up an anchorage. . . . At five next morning I saw them all aground, almost dry, about five or six miles distant from us . . . many of the merchant, and several of the ships of war, were on their broadsides ; and then I could not help regretting the want of fire-ships and bomb-vessels.

He then explains how it was that he could not bring his ships nearer in to the enemy.

By this time all the boats and launches from Rochefort and the adjacent places were employed in carrying out warps to drag them through the soft mud as soon as they should be waterborne. In the meantime they threw overboard their guns, stores, and ballast, and were even heaving water out of their ports, all which we could plainly discern. By this means some of them got that day as far up as the mouth of the Charente ; but the "Florissante" was not got above Fouras on Thursday afternoon, and the greatest part of their merchant ships were left aground in towards Isle Madame, when we fell down to Basque Road. The frigates' [the "Medway" and "Chichester," which were sent up the channel as far as they could go] boats cut away about eighty buoys laid on their anchors and on what they had thrown overboard.

He concludes by describing the steps he took to destroy the new works which had been commenced on the Isle of Aix since the demolition of the fort in the previous year's expedition.

From the admiral's log-book one or two additional facts may be gleaned. It seems the French ships were so eager to make off, and understood their soft

muddy shoals so well, that they kept all sail set while on the mud, the wind being fair. It also appears that on the 6th two French galleys, large vessels, with a light draft of water, propelled by oars, and carrying heavy guns, came out from Fort Fouras and attacked the "Chichester," which had got aground. These were beaten off from a distance by the guns of the other frigates; but there were no craft of their own light draft of water to deal with them; and the ships' boats, at such a distance from the ships, were not fit to cope with such an enemy. This was the addition of insult to injury which rankled in the admiral's mind.

The acknowledgment of Hawke's despatch by the Admiralty displays a coldness and reserve which indicates some previous misunderstanding. There is not a word of thanks for the service he has performed. The Secretary on his own account "heartily congratulates" him "on his safe return."

On April 30th the admiral begs for "three or four days' leave to settle some private affairs, if their Lordships think I can be spared." The reply is not in Hawke's Letter-book; but its tenor is plain from the rough note of the Secretary, endorsed on the back of the above letter:—

The Lords would be very glad to indulge him on every occasion, but at this time they wish him to be on the spot, as not only the ships at Spithead but those cruising are under his command.

It was evident that there was something wrong; and we are now to witness the explosion.

Pitt, having provided for the success of his plans in

America, was by no means satisfied with the old routine of blockading and breaking up French expeditions. Undaunted by the Rochefort failure, he had resolved upon a series of descents on the north coast of France, of a magnitude which should divert her military forces, and relieve Frederick; and he had learnt the lessons taught him in the previous year. He had now made up his mind that these descents should no longer be hampered by large ships which could not approach the shore, nor fail for want of an abundance of small vessels, the want of which had just been so severely felt. A covering fleet there should be, in order to deal with squadrons which might issue from the eastern ports to attack his flotilla. That fleet Hawke should command as of old; but the actual work of landing and co-operating with the troops should be performed by the young captain who had found an opportunity of distinguishing himself wherever he had had a chance, the Hon. Richard Howe, under whom the French pilot, Thierri, had in the previous year particularly begged to be sent, "*parce que le Capitaine Howe est jeune et brave.*"

It has been universally supposed that Lord Anson was from the first intended to take command of the covering fleet, and that Hawke was only to be, as he came in fact to be, the second in command. The following letter will show that this was not the case. Hawke had been ordered to collect and equip the fleet, and was preparing for the receipt of final orders, when Howe one day waited on him with a message, the effect of which was like that of a thunder-clap. We must describe it in his own words :—

SIR, PORTSMOUTH, 7 o'clock P.M., 10th May, 1758.

About 4 o'clock arrived here Captain Howe, and delivered me their Lordships' order of the 9th. In last September I was sent out to command an expedition under all the disadvantages one could possibly labour under, arising chiefly from my being under the influence of land-officers in Councils of War at sea. Last cruise I went out on a particular service almost without the least means of performing it. Now, every means to ensure success is provided; another is to reap the credit; while it is probable I, with the capital ships, might be ordered to cruise in such manner as to prevent his failing in this attempt. To fit out his ships for this service I have been kept here, and even now have their Lordships' directions, at least in terms, to obey him. He is to judge of what he wants for his expedition; he is to make his demands, and I am to comply with them. I have therefore directed my flag immediately to be struck, and left their Lordships' orders with Vice-Admiral Holburne. For no consequence that can attend my striking it without orders shall ever out-balance with me [the] wearing it one moment with discredit.

I am, &c.,
E. HAWKE.

Before making any remarks on this letter (which, of course, is in his own hand-writing), it will be well to print the rough notes of the Secretary to the Admiralty which appear on the back, since they are a trustworthy record of what took place in consequence of it. They show that explanations had already passed, and that the indignant admiral had been assured that there was no ground for his chief grievance, the supposed appointment of Howe to attack the French once more at Rochefort, to the disparagement of his superior officer, who had twice already been employed on that particular service, and under whom Howe had himself acted a subordinate

part. Time and reflection had convinced Hawke that, whatever else remained, it was his business to make the best of it.

May 12th, 1758 : Sir Edward Hawke being called in, was acquainted that the Lords having received his letter on the 10th, --which being of so extraordinary a nature—sent for him to know what he had to say for taking such a step. His reason for it was he apprehended Mr. Howe was going upon a service where he had the honour to command upon two expeditions, which he thought a slur upon his reputation, and that he might have been represented to the King as an unfit person for such command--which affecting his credit, he hastily determined to strike his flag ; but being since informed that he was mistaken, and that his character and honour were not so much touched as he apprehended when the suspicion he had of Mr. Howe's going to Basque Roads arose—from the Lords asking him some days since for a draft of the Roads. Did not strike his flag out of resentment to any particular person, but merely because he thought his honour was affected.

As the official letters begin again on May 17th from the "Ramilies" at Portsmouth, these rough minutes no doubt represent the facts. We are unable to pass a full judgment on the causes of quarrel which had preceded this outburst, but that both parties should be willing to make it up is creditable to both. Hawke was too important an officer to be dealt with summarily at that stage of the national affairs, though he had lost his temper, and placed himself in the power of the Lords Commissioners. Such a letter would have drawn down vengeance on a less necessary Commander-in-Chief. It was written without waiting to ascertain the chief fact on which it was based, and it is the single letter which betrays a want of the courtesy and prudence which are invari-

ably present in the whole course of his official correspondence. On the other hand, every officer must guard his own honour and credit, and there are limits beyond which he cannot be expected to go. Resignation might be better for the service than remaining in a position where the sense of having been disgraced would be sure to interfere with the proper relations between the superior and his inferiors. And we have seen that preceding passages between him and the Admiralty were present to his mind. He could no longer be useful if the conditions of success were denied, and, as he thought, systematically denied, to him as Commander-in-Chief. Let some one else, to whom the Admiralty would listen, try his hand.

"Their Lordships," conscious, no doubt, that there was a good deal in all this, must have acted with the greatest promptitude in soothing the feelings of the admiral, or the explanation could hardly have taken place in London at an interval of only one full day since the letter was written. Nothing could have damaged them or the service more than a public exposure of all these matters; and their dignity was saved by the admiral's acknowledgment that he had acted "hastily." He was willing to resume command, and to swallow the bitter pill of Howe's independent position, rather than that the affair should go any farther. It was now to be buried in oblivion; nor would it ever have been known, had not the desire to do honour to a great man brought to light an incident which there is no reason for concealing, but rather every reason to publish as a contribution to a

sketch of character. So little did the public guess the true nature of Hawke's visit to London that, under date of May 15th, 1758, the "Gentleman's Magazine" reports :—

> Admiral Hawke arrived at Portsmouth from London where he had been to wait at the Admiralty on extraordinary affairs. He is to command in the intended enterprise of Lord Anson.

This storm cleared the air. Hawke had in an unguarded moment broken through the reticence which on all other occasions seems to have been a part of his nature, and told the Admiralty "a bit of his mind," which it was highly desirable they should in some way or other know. His subsequent relations with the Board show marked signs of improvement. On the other hand, Lord Anson, perceiving that in his desire to carry out the whole of Pitt's scheme, he had put an unusual and somewhat too severe a strain upon one who did not deserve ill-treatment, determined to solve the existing difficulty by taking command of the fleet in his own person, with Hawke as second in command, and with Howe at the head of his special flotilla in the independent position for which Pitt designed him. This distinct independence no doubt shaped itself out in connection with Hawke's remonstrance. What the admiral had felt was a very natural repugnance to being responsible and yet not responsible, to having a body of troops and a squadron of ships nominally under his command, while the weapon was being wielded by a far junior and wholly independent officer. If his destination as commander of a mere covering force cruising in the

Bay of Biscay had been explained to him, nothing more would have been heard of it.

Another, and equally direct, result of this difference with the Admiralty was the illness which, in the course of a very few weeks, entirely prostrated Hawke. There had been several previous indications of failing health; and we may fairly suppose that the above letter would scarcely have been sent off in such a hurry if he had been able to exercise his ordinary power of self-control. The exertions necessary for expediting such an immense fleet must have tried him severely. By the 27th of the month it was ready to sail, and Anson on that day made the signal to un-moor. On that day also Howe's squadron completed the embarkation of the troops from the Isle of Wight (and sailed on June 1st), and on that day the twenty-two ships of the line which Anson and Hawke commanded proceeded to cruise off Brest and the adjacent coast. On June 18th Hawke wrote to Anson as follows:—

MY LORD, "RAMILIES," at sea.

It is with great regret I am obliged to acquaint your lordship that the ill state of my health will not admit of my continuing at sea; and as I am at present in too bad a condition to be moved out of her into any other, I should esteem it a very great favour if you will be so kind as to order the "Ramilies" to Spithead with me. She may return to you immediately.

Anson complies with the request, and on June 22nd Hawke writes from the "Ramilies" at Spithead:—

SIR,

After struggling hard with a severe fever and cold, with which I was seized soon after sailing from St. Helen's, I was

obliged on the 18th instant to apply to Lord Anson to send the "Ramilies" to Spithead with me, as the bad state of my health would not admit of my being moved into any other ship. The increase of my disorder renders me altogether incapable of duty, and therefore I hope their Lordships will indulge me with leave to go into the country for the re-establishment of my health, which I would fain hope will not take up a great while.

I am, &c.,

E. HAWKE.

The Secretary to the Admiralty has noted on the back of this letter :—

Own receipt—acquainting him the Lords are much concerned for his indisposition, and give him leave to come ashore, hoping he will meet with a speedy recovery.

On August 26th Hawke replies from Swathling to some petty question from the Admiralty, concluding with :—

I came on shore so very ill that I neither brought books nor papers with me, so that I can say nothing more to this affair at present.

The Secretary notes once more on the back of the letter :—

Return Sir Edward thanks, and acquaint him I hope his health is established.

Their Lordships, it would seem, had at last found out that the man on whom for so many years had devolved arduous and multifarious duties which would now-a-days be shared amongst several admirals, was only made of flesh and blood like other people, and if anything more was to be got out of him, must have a rest. The tone of the Secretary reflects a change at

the Board. For eleven months the admiral is allowed to enjoy the repose of his own home, and we hear no more of him till he hoists his flag once more on board the "Ramilies," on May 13th, 1759.

Meanwhile a very few words will bring us up to the end of the year now before us.

Lord Anson kept the sea all the summer, handing the squadron over to Admiral Saunders in September; but the cruise was perfectly uneventful. Howe's operations were of a mixed character. Some portions of it were decidedly successful; but, as so often happens, the disaster of the last portion caused the public to forget what had preceded it. The three general officers who had pronounced on Mordaunt's conduct at Rochefort, were placed in command of the 19,000 troops (including 6,000 marines), which formed the invading force; for it was but fair that they might see if they could do better. The greatest secrecy was observed, and it is not unworthy of notice that great pains were taken not even to whisper the word "expedition," for that was a name of ill omen, having been used to designate the descent on Rochefort. This was an "enterprise." The Duke of Marlborough, however, showed no spark of the genius of his great relative; and it was universally thought that much more ought to have been done with so large and well selected a force than was accomplished; but yet Pitt's purpose was on the whole served. A large quantity of shipping and stores was burnt at St. Malo, which, since it was a famous nest of privateers, was satisfactory to English merchants; and the alarm was sufficient to relieve the

allies of England from pressure on the eastern frontiers of France.*

The old general, Bligh, who succeeded to the command which Marlborough and his colleagues now gave up in disgust as "buccaneering," preferring the command of the troops sent to serve against France in Germany, was at first more successful than they had been; for the destruction of the forts and basin of Cherbourg was a severe blow to the French marine; but the subsequent abortive proceedings at St. Malo, resulting in the disaster at St. Cas, threw the gloom of failure over the whole expedition. It was now discovered that what with the chances of bad weather, the want of information, and the difficulties of re-embarkation, which, even if well performed, has the moral effect of a retreat, this species of warfare was by no means worth the expense it cost, except, indeed, when weighed in the balance of its indirect efforts—a method of calculation involving many difficulties. Indeed, it could not possibly succeed except in the hands of officers of a higher type than a nation can reasonably expect to have always at command; for almost everything is naturally against success. Even Howe, who showed, if possible, more than his usual

* Walpole bitterly remarks concerning the small results of these enterprises:—"Mr. Pitt maintains that he never intended to take St. Maloes, which I believe, because when he did intend to have Rochefort taken last year, he sent no cannon. This year when he never meant to take St. Maloes he sent a vast train of artillery." No doubt the nation, reflecting on the result of all the money spent this year upon descents on the French coast, felt it had not in the previous one fully considered both sides of the question in reference to the Rochefort Expedition.

intrepidity at the crisis, and wonderful professional skill throughout, was justly held responsible for allowing the dis-embarkation of the army

> in unsettled weather on a beach from whence, except the wind blew directly from shore, and that but slightly, it was impossible to re-embark them in time of necessity, and where they could not even effect the landing of artillery, nor communicate with the fleet but under the most hazardous circumstances,

and still more for errors which proved to be disastrous in the details of the re-embarkation ; * while the commission of almost every fault which a general could commit, appears to have led up to the destruction of Bligh's rearguard. Against the advantages Pitt believed he had gained by what historians have called the "piratical" work of this summer, must be placed the occasion given to the French to exult over the catastrophe of St. Cas, as if it had been a victory grand enough to wipe out the defeats they had hitherto received, and the corresponding depression experienced in England, of which too many half-hearted politicians were ready enough to take advantage. On the other hand, the moral effect produced by a country's being able to prove itself strong enough to invade another, even though at the cost of a thousand men, must be taken into account, and this effect was undoubtedly great in France, where the threat of invading England had hitherto been a weapon constantly brandished over English heads, and projects for which had formed a part of every plan of a campaign. The tables were now turned. Pitt's admirers summed up on his side ; his enemies on the other.

* Entick's "History of the War," vol. iii. pp. 210-213.

The effect of the news of the capture of Louisbourg was, however, great enough to turn the popular feeling in favour of the Minister; and though again depressed by the failure of Abercrombie at Crown Point, it was again raised by the capture of Frontenac and Duquesne—two of the obnoxious French forts which occasioned the war—by Bradstreet and Forbes; and finally settled in the sanguine belief, justified by the event, that the enemy was on the point of being beaten all along the American line. Keppel's gallant capture of Goree closed the successes of the year, and gave as high a pre-eminence to the British in Africa as they had gained in America. In India the atrocities of the Black Hole had been amply avenged at the Battle of Plassey in the preceding year; and though Pocock in this year had been unable to obtain a decisive victory over D'Aché, he had carried off the fruits of victory. Frederick's campaigns had not this year been much less chequered than usual, but his star was still in the ascendant; and, what specially affected England, he had found a general in Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick equal to the post of second in command; and this excellent Prince, at the head of the British and Hanoverian forces, was evidently capable of leading them against the French in a way which would justify the much-criticised alliance. Thus the year ended with a buoyant hopefulness which contrasted brilliantly with the gloom of 1757, and offered the best augury for 1759.

No great naval action had been fought. Hawke in his retirement might fairly feel that he had done his part in the year's work, and that it was not much

behind that of any of his brother officers. Osborn, Howe, and Keppel had been more before the public, but their services had not been of the highest class. A new rival in reputation had appeared in the gallant Pocock ; but the indecisive character of his two battles with D'Aché, due partly to the old adherence to the line of battle, and partly to misconduct on the part of some of his captains, barred his way to fame. Boscawen had carried off the chief naval honours of the year. Still it was the result of brave and able assistance given to Amherst and Wolfe, and not of any conflict between fleets. Hawke was not the man to grudge the honours his rival deserved.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLOCKADE OF BREST.
1759.

THE success of Pitt's war policy during the wonderful year 1759, at which we have now arrived, was certainly not the result of accident, but, humanly speaking, the reward of well-laid plans. Those plans would have come to nothing if it had not been for the support of the nation, exhibited in unlimited supplies, his own judicious selection of officers, and the spirit he had infused into the services. And yet, as if to show how easily all such advantages might have been rendered useless, one cannot but reflect that the unforeseen delays incurred by the expeditions of Amherst and Prideaux, so extensive and so delicate were the combinations of Pitt's American strategy, all but ruined Wolfe's attack upon Quebec. It may safely be said that nothing but the superlative merits of that officer conferred success upon an enterprise of which the hero himself had more than begun to despair.* And in Hawke's Battle of Quiberon, the other great event of the year, so tremendous were the difficulties of keeping a large fleet watching one of equal

* See Wolfe's Despatch, September 5.

force in the Bay of Biscay during the fierce gales of November, that it would seem but a bare possibility that they should meet at sea, much more that the French invading expedition should be utterly broken up.

In both cases,—the crowning victories of the Seven Years' War,—it was the personal character of the commanders that told with decisive effect at the critical moment. Pitt must receive the whole of the credit for selecting Wolfe, for it was he who raised him from the junior ranks for this express purpose.

We have seen enough of Hawke's career to place him in a different position with reference to Pitt. He had long ago made his place. The public quite understood how it was that he had not done more as yet during the new war. From the moment of his victory in 1747, unbounded confidence had been reposed in him by the nation, and no Minister could dare to place in other hands the command of a fleet which was to protect England from a threatened invasion. Thus, when the French Minister, believing that England had spent her whole strength upon distant expeditions, conceived that a favourable opportunity had arisen for concentrating all the naval forces of France upon one great effort, and launching them against England with a military force double the size of that which Pitt had recently sent against his country, Hawke was at once called to the front, and put in command of the twenty-five line-of-battle ships which had been got ready for his flag.

Pitt was singularly fortunate in being matched against a Government which was at this time defi-

cient in the ordinary powers of a war-executive. It had in M. Bompart a good officer commanding a serviceable squadron in the American seas. A very little activity on his part, if it had been properly directed from home, would have seriously damaged Pitt's American combinations ; and if an invasion of England was thought possible, the necessary arrangements for the junction of squadrons should have been made at a season of the year when there might have been a chance of success. If not made then, to expose the last fleet on which France could reckon to the violence of winter gales and English fleets, instead of keeping it safe in port till the next spring, was a desperate and ill-judged act of temerity. After all, England was but enjoying her fair turn in the possession of a superior Administration. France had been well served during the rule of the English drivellers.

It was not till May that the equipment of the fleet in Brest harbour gave any serious alarm. On May 13th Hawke hoisted his flag ; on May 20th he reports to the Admiralty that he has sailed from Torbay. On the back of the letter the Secretary writes :— "The Lords are pleased with the expedition he has made." This good beginning of civility is followed up in the subsequent correspondence. We hear no more of any differences, except perhaps when in an agony of alarm for fear the French should get out while Hawke is necessarily absent from the blockade, the nervous expression of feeling can hardly be restrained. This year, for the first time, complaints are attended to and abuses remedied ; and the

admiral feels strong in his support from home. It is obvious that some petty jealousies and backstairs whispers had been previously at work, but these are now for the most part hushed in the presence of imminent danger, and under the eye of the Minister who by this time understood small things as well as great, a man who would not be slow to single out an offender. Many an abuse had been brought to light by Hawke, and the process had made him many enemies. Their stings had been felt ; but the danger was over, for this year at least.

It was well that the admiral had already learnt by experience what it was to keep a large fleet together in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay ; but he had never been tried as he was on this occasion. It was exactly six months before he found the opportunity of which he was in search ; and the reader will perhaps desire to have something more of the detail of this sort of work than has been hitherto given, with a view to a comprehension, not only of the character of the hero, but of the state of the naval service in that day. Nothing more of the sort will be necessary after the narration of this cruise. It is the typical example of the ripe seamanship of the whole century. The names of the ships, and of the officers who actually fought at Quiberon, will be found at the end of this chapter ; but it must be mentioned here that Sir Charles Hardy, an excellent officer who had seen much service, was the vice-admiral and Francis Geary (of whom we shall hear again) the rear-admiral of the fleet. Of the captains, Howe, who had succeeded to the peerage in the previous year,

commanded his favourite ship, the "Magnanime," and was always to the front. No less than six others were sons of noblemen, Augustus Hervey (the husband of the too-celebrated Duchess of Kingston, and afterwards to be the third Earl of Bristol), Keppel, Barrington, Byron, Digby, and Edgecumbe. Every one of these were, or became, officers of high distinction. Hervey and Keppel were the eyes and hands of the fleet. With them should be named Captain Duff of the "Rochester," who commanded the frigates, and brought on the action at Quiberon. With the exception of Peter Denis, who has already come before us, none of the rest were men of any special mark; but comparing the above list with that of any other in those times, it will be seen that everyone who could make interest to sail with Hawke on this occasion used his opportunity. To these may be added a young officer who had in the previous year seen service under Howe, and who was now to complete what was then thought sufficient education for a prince, under Hawke's flag,—Prince Edward, Duke of York, the next brother to the future King.

Some notices of this young Prince will be found in Horace Walpole's letters; and Barrow, in his "Life of Howe," has given one of that officer's letters describing the difficulties under which he laboured in fitting him out and preparing him for sea. All the anecdotes of him in relation to Howe's descents on the French coast go to show that he possessed the hereditary courage of his family, and that he evinced an ardent desire to confront danger, and to become a worthy member of his chosen profession. The eyes

of the country were turned fondly towards him. In a MS. Journal of 1758, in possession of the author of this Life, the writer, being at Portland, where Howe's squadron was anchored, remarks that Prince Edward

> gives great satisfaction to everybody. Besides he has been at church, which in people of his quality is looked upon as a great condescension.

The Prince's request to be allowed to go to Quebec with Wolfe had been refused, but the old King decided that he should join Hawke's flagship, and bear his share in the expected battle. He would seem to have already borne the title of post-captain; but Hawke nowhere mentions his rank.

As Prince Edward's service on board the "Ramilies" only lasted about two months, what notices occur of him may be stated here. The admiral, having been told, towards the end of July, that the Prince is to come out in the "Hero" (Captain Edgecumbe), "with his retinue," the admiral says:—

> I am left to myself as to the manner of receiving him. As this is the case I shall pay him all the honour, in the best of my judgment, due to the grandson of my Royal Master.

The Prince is at any rate a good letter-writer, for the admiral absolves himself from the duty of making reports about him, as "his Royal Highness writes by every opportunity himself." When driven by a gale into Plymouth on October 13th, the Prince, with all his servants and baggage, leaves the "Ramilies." Thus the Royal youth loses the great battle in which he had hoped to share. We shall come across him again as Hawke's rear-admiral in 1762.

The latter part of the letter of June 15th refers to what became the rule of the whole blockade. When a westerly gale came on it was impossible for the enemy to get out to sea from Brest, or any of the smaller ports on the coast; but there was a very great chance of some of the blockading force being driven on shore; and the question was how to get the fleet into a place of safety like Plymouth or Torbay, and out again before the wind changed and allowed the French to sail. It was like a cat watching a mouse. The vigilance necessary on the part of the blockading force was almost as much a matter of instinct and sagacity as in the case of the inferior animal.

The gales, the victualling, and the cleaning difficulties really govern the situation. We have seen something of this sort before, and now witness it on a large scale. On this very visit to Torbay the admiral reports the arrival of five victuallers with 260 tons of beer on board: "otherwise ten of my ships must have gone in within the next week." Another proof of his desire to prevent the usual injustice of passing over senior officers because they are useful, occurs in this letter. He applies for the promotion of his First-Lieutenant Robert Taylor, "the oldest lieutenant now employed, and a sober, diligent, good officer." His ships have suffered severely in the gale which drove him into Torbay, but on June 21st he is off Ushant, and hears from Captain Duff that he counted seventeen sail in Brest, and that he is "of opinion they might all be there. I am very happy, after all the bad weather, in having got safe on my station again

before they should stir." He is soon able to send home a correct list of nineteen sail of the line at Brest, and one in the basin ready to come into the road, under M. Beaufremont, flag, and M. du Verger St. André, commodore; and, shortly after, of twenty sail of the line. M. de Conflans arrives early in July to take over the command.

Intelligence now pours in that the invasion is to be made from Havre, and that the French Government are obliged to resort to pressing all the fishermen, and even the ploughmen of the coast districts, to man their ships. As he finds the French are far from ready, the admiral arranges to send in two ships at a time to Plymouth, at each spring tide, to be cleaned, and he transmits his warm thanks to Captain Hervey for the "diligence and address" he has shown in ascertaining the state of the French fleet. It will "quiet the minds in England which have lately been greatly alarmed." Hervey writes a grateful letter in reply.

Shortly afterwards Hervey wins the admiral's further approbation :—

Your behaviour yesterday gave me the greatest satisfaction, and merits the highest approbation. I had an additional pleasure, too, that of there being so many witnesses of it. I sincerely thank you, sir, for your conduct and bravery, and beg farther that you will in a public manner, in my name, thank your officers and company for their gallantly seconding your endeavours to destroy the enemy. I have too just an opinion of your discretion, conduct, and resolution, to doubt of the utmost being performed in every service on which you shall be employed; but I cannot think of running the risk of disabling three ships of the line for an object so inconsiderable as a

privateer and four or five empty transports, for such they are. You will therefore send back to me the "Montagu," "Juno," and "Pluto," and continue with the "Achilles" and "Colchester" to watch the motions of the enemy in Brest Road.

Such timely notice of good service was, it is plain, the right way to keep up the zeal and buoyancy of spirit, which were put to a heavy strain under the terrible tediousness of a prolonged blockade. What a contrast to the reserve of a Mathews and a Byng! It was of a piece with the enthusiastic encomium he passed on two of his captains at the battle of Quiberon: "You behaved like angels"—not that we have much notion how angels would behave on the quarterdeck. Hawke was far from being a man of words and sentiment; but he was essentially just and upright. If a man deserved praise he should have it. And it was the same in his relations to all ranks. It is in this very week that he writes to the Admiralty in favour of the carpenter of his ship:—

Their Lordships will give me leave to send them the enclosed letter from a person sober, diligent, and in every respect capable of his duty, struggling with the difficulty of supporting a numerous family.

The performance for which Hervey received such praise was his manœuvre off Brest, by which, with one other ship, he maintained his blockade of Conquet Bay, in spite of an enemy twice his own strength, who were sent out to cut him off. After receiving notice of this movement from Hervey, Hawke reports:—

I made all the sail I could with the squadron, and soon discovered the "Monmouth" [Hervey's ship] and "Montagu"

chasing three 74's and a 64-gun ship of the enemy. Never did officer show greater conduct and resolution than did Captain Hervey, and he was bravely seconded by Captain Lendrick; but the distance rendered all their efforts ineffectual. The whole squadron of the enemy had loosed their topsails at daybreak. At about 11 A.M. they made a show of coming out; I had, full in their view, and close to the entrance of the road the squadron formed, and lying-to, for their reception.

The French had, however, no idea as yet of a general engagement. Not long before, the master of a merchant ship had brought, or pretended to bring, a message from Conflans to Hawke, to the effect that if he would wait fifteen days he would be glad to drink a glass of wine with him, but this was bravado. The English ships were to be worn out with the blockade, and driven off by some storm; and then the time would have arrived.

The admiral had now to deal with the question of neutrals. The Swedish and Dutch flags were being used for the conveyance of stores to the French fleet, which, in consequence of the strict blockade, they could obtain in no other way. On July 16th he informs the Admiralty that he

had given Captain Hervey orders not to suffer a neutral vessel of any nation whatever to enter Brest, but direct them to stand off the coast. The four Swedes he has now sent to me [they had been cut out from under French batteries] are furnished with cargoes which, according to their own account, appear to be only too necessary to the enemy in their present equipment. Besides, from their manner of stowage and some other circumstances, there is some ground to suspect they have guns and other contraband goods underneath all.

He begs he may have more small vessels to keep

up the blockade. Later on he explains to Captain Reynolds :—

My orders were not to suffer any neutral vessels to enter these ports. I did not mean that they should be seized unless found with contraband effects, only that they should be sent off that coast.

The Admiralty cordially approve of his proceedings in the matter ; but it appears they forgot this important circumstance ; for the admiral is put to great straits by the subsequent claims of the neutral nations upon him personally.

About this time, the enemy beginning to show a little more life, he has to alter his plans for relieving ships.

The "Hercules" company being very sickly I sent her in to heel [for a partial cleaning] and refresh her men ten days in port. For the disappointment I met with by the two first I sent in not saving the spring, has induced me to alter my plan, and give orders for no more line-of-battle ships to clean. If the enemy should slip out and run, we must follow as fast as we can. I have not yet received the supplies of butter and cheese, beef, pork, &c., insomuch that I cannot help regretting the want of a commanding officer at Plymouth to see all orders executed with the expedition and punctuality necessary. As I shall not now have it in my power to relieve the whole squadron, and it must in all probability remain here a considerable time, will their Lordships give me leave to recommend to their consideration the sending out live cattle now and then, under such regulations as shall be thought proper?

The beer again!

July 24 : The beer brewed at Plymouth is in reality so little relief to the squadron that I have sent in orders to send me no more of it. Our daily employment is condemning of it, which embarrasses us many ways. I have therefore sent this

express to entreat their Lordships will send us beer from the eastward as far as possible, and directly to the rendezvous without touching at Plymouth.

To the responsible officer at Plymouth he writes with more asperity :—

The beer brewed at your port is so excessively bad that it employs the whole time of the squadron in surveying it and throwing it overboard. . . . A quantity of bread from the "Ramilies" will be returned to you by the "Elizabeth," though not altogether unfit for use, yet so full of weavils and maggots that it would have infected all the bread come on board this day.

Soon afterwards to the Admiralty :—

I am extremely glad to find their Lordships have ordered bullocks and sheep for the preservation of the sick. I hope such numbers will be sent as that the ships' companies may have a share, to prevent their falling down in scorbutic disorders.

In this same letter of July 24th he makes the following interesting remark on the force he thinks necessary to fight the French :—

In my former letter I sent their Lordships the disposition I had made of the squadron. I never desired or intended to keep more line-of-battle ships than equalled the number of the enemy, which is now augmented to twenty-two. I have at present twenty-three, and seldom have had more than twenty-four ; and that only during a day. If ships take up a month by cleaning, from the time they leave me to their return, it will be impossible for me to keep up the squadron. The only practicable way is to heel, &c., and confine them to ten days in port, for the refreshment of their companies, in case they should miss the spring [tide].

Hervey now reports to him that he has received information that "the French soldiers and people are much dispirited, and cry out great shame on their

fleet for being drove in again," but he says he does not believe they can sail yet. He would destroy the vessels in Conquet Bay if he only had more frigates. Hawke begs for more ; and finding Captain Edgecumbe of the "Hero," who had lost his masts in the gale, longer refitting than he expected (being really detained for Prince Edward), he hurried him back saying:—"I am in the utmost distress for want of frigates." In one of Hervey's letters of this date the captain says:

I don't despair yet of giving the enemy a stroke that you won't dislike, when wind, &c., combine. I thank you, sir, for the obliging message you sent me by Mr. Lugger. I can never but feel pleasure when employed under you, where you think me of any use ; and I own I prefer this to the most lucrative station, as I think we shall yet be of service to you.

The admiral now explains himself more fully to the Admiralty, who had sent an order that five ships should be sent in at a time for cleaning and refreshment:—

Their Lordships will give me leave to observe that the relief of the squadron depends more on the refreshment of the ships' companies than on cleaning the ships. By the hurry the latter must be performed in (unless the ship continues a month or five weeks in port, which the present exigency will by no means admit of) the men would be so harassed and fatigued that they would return to me in a worse condition than when they left me. This made me prefer ordering some of them to heel and boot-hose-top only, remaining at rest for ten days in port, and at their departure bringing such a quantity of fresh meat as would keep sweet at this season, two or three live bullocks, and twenty live sheep. The present bottoms of the new ships in particular are better and will last longer than if they were, by cleaning, to be burnt off, and get a pease-porridge one in their

stead. However, I shall endeavour to comply with all their Lordships' directions in such manner as, to the best of my judgment, will answer their intentions of employing me here. For as to myself it is a matter of indifference whether I fight the enemy, if they should come out, with an equal number, one ship more, or one ship less. 'Tis true, in obedience to my instructions, I send their Lordships from time to time such intelligence as I can procure, which has in general been from men intercepted in French boats. But I depend not on it. What I see I believe, and regulate my conduct accordingly. . . . Our daily employment is condemning the beer from Plymouth, insomuch as that article is becoming very scarce in the squadron. Give me leave, therefore, to repeat my entreaties for beer being sent with the utmost expedition from the eastward.

The meaning of the word "boot-hose-top," which is of frequent occurrence in letters of those times, is to heel over the ship as far as possible, to scrape or burn off the grass, slime, shells, barnacles, &c., which adhere to the bottom of a wooden vessel long out at sea, and to daub it over with a mixture of tallow, sulphur, and resin, as a temporary protection. This is the "pease-porridge" bottom of the above letter.

The Secretary replies, on August 13th, that everyone of his requests is complied with. A commanding officer of proper rank should be appointed for Plymouth; a "Commissioner of the Victualling" is sent down to enquire about the Plymouth beer; beer from several other places is sent out, as well as wine from Guernsey; and

four transports are to be constantly employed in carrying out to you live stock and refreshments for the use of the sick; and the surplus to be distributed amongst the well of your squadron.

But in a later letter he says:—

Their Lordships being concerned to find such quantities of beer condemned which has been brewed in the King's own brew-house,

they desire that a flag officer and some captains may make a special survey.

It may be noticed, by the way, that this resolute determination to expose the neglect of the victualling offices involves the admiral in a large amount of disagreeable correspondence with various "Commissioners"; but his reasoning is indisputable, and the new survey entirely bears him out. On August 28th he writes triumphantly:—

As the Portsmouth, Dover, and London beer held good to the last, I look on it as a demonstration that the badness of the Plymouth beer was owing entirely to a want of the due proportion of malt and hops. . . . The little fresh meat we have has already shown itself in very salutary effects.

The Secretary also says:—

I am to acquaint you the call for ships is so great off Havre, Dunkirk, and the northward that their Lordships have it not in their power to spare any 50-gun ship.

The reference here made to Havre and Dunkirk will remind the reader that the French project of invasion embraced, like that of Tencin in 1744, and of Napoleon in 1804, the preparation of a flotilla of flat-bottomed boats which were to cross the Channel with troops, while the fleet from Brest, having disposed of the British, was to support the landing. A diversion was also to be made from Dunkirk, upon the coast of Ireland, under the celebrated Thurot. Commodore Boys was sent to watch Thurot; and he was finally disposed of by Captain Elliot in February

of the next year. Rodney, now a rear-admiral, was selected for the bombardment of Havre, and the destruction of the boats. This he effected in July without loss, but at the painful cost of the destruction of the town itself, a measure which has been much blamed, but was unavoidable. Havre had to be blockaded during the remainder of the year. The other drain upon the resources of the Admiralty was for the squadron of Sir Peircy Brett, who was ordered to leave his command at the Downs, and proceed to Yarmouth Roads for the purpose of intercepting the dreaded Thurot if he should escape from Boys.

Boscawen also had been sent with a large squadron to deal with the French ships under M. de la Clue at Toulon. These were fondly destined to join Conflans, and the united fleet to destroy Hawke ; after which was to be the invasion. As usual Boscawen did his duty ; and Hawke never for a moment expected that the threatened junction would take place. The tactics of the former were, however, not a little rash. After failing in the attack upon some French frigates sheltered by batteries at the extremity of Toulon harbour, the ships employed were so much damaged that the whole squadron had to proceed to Gibraltar ; and the French, taking advantage of its absence, all but succeeded in stealing out of the Mediterranean without notice. Some of them even got into Cadiz, but the rest were caught by Boscawen with a far superior force, and driven on shore at Lagos, with the loss of five line-of-battle ships, as well as of the Commander-in-Chief, and scarcely any loss on the part of the British. The timely nature of this

service made it particularly acceptable in England, where Boscawen was deservedly a favourite. He took the first opportunity of giving Hawke the necessary information :—

"NAMUR," off Cape St. Vincent,
SIR, 20th August, 1759.

On the 18th instant I engaged a squadron of French men-of-war, in number seven, commanded by Mons. de la Clue ; they sailed from Toulon the 5th, but parted company with five of the line and three frigates the 18th, in the night, coming through the Streights. The seven I engaged were as followeth :—

Ocean	80	Mons. de la Clue } burnt.
Redoubtable	74	
Centaur	74	taken.
Temeraire	74	
Modeste	64	
Souverain	74	escaped but shattered.
Guerriere	74	escaped, little hurt.
Fantasque	64	lost company coming through the Streights.
Lion		
Triton		
Fier	50	do.
L'Oriflamme		
Chimere	26	do.
Minerve	24	
Gratieuse	24	

I heartily wish you may meet with them. I hope to make sail this evening, and as I am bound home, will endeavour to fall in with you. If I do, I will hoist a Dutch ensign at the ensign staff, and a Spanish Jack at the foretopmast head.

I am, sir, &c.,
E. BOSCAWEN.*

* Hawke Papers.

When Boscawen wrote this, he did not know that the above ships which had "lost company" had made their way to Cadiz. Admiral Brodrick soon heard of it, and blockaded them there; but their escape was possible, and added to the anxieties of Hawke's position. He is also pressed from home on the subject of the transports fitting for bodies of troops at Port Louis, Vannes, Nantes, and other places on the coast of Brittany. The disasters sustained by the Havre armament had caused increased activity in these western parts, and the cruising squadrons detached from the fleet are kept continually on the alert, one of them extending its vigilance down as far as Rochefort. Affairs, however, look more serious when news arrives of M. Bompart's squadron having sailed from America. On August 28th the admiral writes :—

> If M. Bompart's destination should be Brest I shall do my utmost to interrupt him. But should he be bound to Rochefort I must not think of him for the above reason,

viz., that he must not, as he had previously explained, be left with a number of ships inferior to that of the enemy. His men are also just now "falling down with the scurvy."

It was at this time that he performed the order sent him from the Admiralty to celebrate the "glorious victory" of Minden "before Brest, with the ships under your command; and their Lordships recommend it to you to take all opportunities to make the French acquainted with the occasion of the Feu de joye."

Two points affecting the general progress of the service engage our attention at this point. We have seen that gun-locks and tubes for firing had been favourably reported upon by a Commission which sat after Hawke's action in 1747, and whose appointment had probably been occasioned by the accident from a powder-horn in the action, which nearly incapacitated the admiral himself. The upper deck guns of ships had accordingly been supplied with this useful invention; but objections, based on the danger of tubes flying about between decks, had prevented their further adoption. The Admiralty now send orders for a further report as to the extension of the system to all the guns of a ship. This is presented to Hawke by Admiral Geary, Lord Howe, and other captains. Of these the most intelligent evidence is that by Captain Denis, who is strongly in favour of extending both locks and tubes to all guns, as removing the danger of powder-horns, the obstruction by smoke, and the obstacle to quick firing. He had provided them for his ship at his own expense. Howe is only in favour of locks if smaller than as yet adopted. Hawke sums up the seven opinions by remarking that "in my opinion both of them [locks and tubes] will be very useful." It would thus appear that this, which is perhaps the greatest advance in naval gunnery made before our own times, was only very slowly introduced. Indeed, it was not adopted generally till almost the close of the century. Improved construction was even yet required, as Hawke reports unfavourably of those supplied to his ship and used at Quiberon.

The second point is in reference to the grievance strongly felt by the Masters of the service :—

> We can spare no pilots from the squadron, in which they are very few ; which renders the duty of masters, considering where the squadron cruises, very hard, more particularly [in the case of] such as conduct squadrons ; and I cannot help thinking it reasonable that they should have pilotage allowed them.

So little was it yet understood that this valuable class of men ought to be encouraged to make themselves acquainted with a most important branch of their profession.

In spite of all that had passed the admiral has to write on October 1st :—

> The supplies of beer and water arrive so slow, and the continual disappointments I meet with from the Plymouth beer, with which the clean ships are supplied, not lasting in a condition to be drunk above a week, I am afraid may occasion the breaking up of the squadron.

In the early part of this month the French began to prepare with vigour for the embarkation of their troops, under the protection of 18 armed vessels and frigates, at Morbihan. The general quarters were in the Jesuits' College, and the Duc d'Aiguillon had arrived to take the command. Captain Duff is entrusted with the task of watching that they do not come out to join the fleet at Brest. Admiral Geary is now detached by Hawke to cruise for Bompart's squadron, but recalled by the desire of the Admiralty, who had heard from Admiral Cotes in the West Indies that it was not likely to sail for Europe at present. This seems to have been a mistake, since it enabled the French ships, which did sail, as Hawke

expected, in October, to elude the English blockade; and their junction with Conflans determined that officer, as it was his last chance, to come out; but it was of no consequence in the end. The letters from the Admiralty now betray a nervous state of alarm; and the admiral further explains the situation on October 10th :—

On the intelligence sent me in your letter of September 21st relating to M. Bompart, I thought the intercepting him a very material object. For if the alarm is great now, it must be much greater should he get into Rochefort, and therefore in obedience to what I thought was their Lordships' intention, I sent a squadron able to perform that service. But since their Lordships rely on the opinion of Vice-Admiral Cotes, I have sent orders this morning by a cutter to Rear-Admiral Geary to return to me with the "Sandwich," "Hercules," and "Anson," and to send the "Fame," "Chichester," "Windsor," "Belliqueux," and "Vengeance" to Captain Duff.

The ships' companies, except the "Foudroyant," are in very good health, and as to myself I shall give their Lordships timely notice to supply my place should my return into port be necessary, which, thank God, there is not the least appearance of at present. . . . Their Lordships will pardon me for observing that from the present disposition of the squadron I think there is little room for alarm while the weather continues tolerable. As to Brest, I may safely affirm that, except the few ships that took shelter in Conquet, hardly a vessel of any kind has been able to enter or come out of that port these four months. We are as vigilant as ever, though we have not so much daylight. And if you can give credit to their own people, they have suffered greatly, having been obliged to unload near forty victuallers at Quimperley, and carry their cargoes by land to Brest. It must be the fault of the weather, not ours, if any of them escape.

It is a good proof that the English alarm was not unreasonable, that the very day after this letter was

written it came on to blow so hard from the westward that Hawke had to run for Plymouth, from whence, on October 13th, he reports to the Admiralty :—

Yesterday and this day the gale rather increasing, I thought it better to bear up for Plymouth than run the risk of being scattered and driven farther to the eastward. While this wind shall continue it is impossible for the enemy to stir. I shall keep the ships employed night and day in completing their water and provisions to three months ; for at this season there can be no dependence on victuallers coming to sea. The instant it shall be moderate I shall sail again.

Further, on October 14th :—

I shall not stir out of the "Ramilies" myself, and hope to be at sea again in a few days in a condition to keep there without depending on victuallers. . . . Their Lordships may rest assured there is little foundation for the present alarms. While the wind is fair for the enemy's coming out, it is also favourable for our keeping them in ; and while we are obliged to keep off, they cannot stir. I own it was with regret I called off Rear-Admiral Geary. But as there are many ships now in England I hope their Lordships will soon put it in my power to block up Rochefort, which will effectually distress the enemy everywhere. . . . It blows so very fresh at W.N.W. that we can get neither water nor provisions off.

And once more, on October 17th :—

If their Lordships will consider how necessary it is not to alter any rendezvous, on which I must always keep the Channel open, and that consequently in strong westerly gales I cannot keep the sea, they will readily lay their account with my putting often into this port. At the same time, they may depend upon my keeping the strictest guard over the motions of the enemy that the weather will permit.

The hard service now begins to tell on Hawke's captains,—Hervey and Tyrrell being both laid up, and

the latter obliged to quit his ship. The admiral sails on October 18th, comforted by the approval of the Admiralty, freely given to all his proceedings and plans. The struggle which is to decide the fate of the war—perhaps of the world—now commences in earnest. November is close at hand, and the position of such a fleet, with all its attendant in-shore squadrons, is hazardous in the extreme. Hervey and Duff are warned that there must not be a moment of relaxation on their dangerous posts. The former had thought it necessary to "send in" some of his squadron to refit without consulting the admiral, who writes, on October 23rd :—

As I have but seventeen sail of the line I desire you will not send any ships in without giving their captains positive orders to join me first, as I must be left to judge of the necessity of their going in, and often have resources which you can have no knowledge of. What is done cannot be helped. I congratulate you on the recovery of your health, and hope you may be able to stay out as long as I do.

This wish was not realised. The "Monmouth" and "Nottingham" were worn out with their in-shore work off Brest, and these ships had to come home; thus causing both Hervey and Lendrick to miss the battle in which they had so good a right to expect a share. On parting with the former the admiral says :—

Captain Hervey has suffered much in his constitution by the fatigues and watchings of the critical station he has been on since the first of July. Through the whole he has given such proofs of diligence, activity, intrepidity, and judgment that it would be doing injustice to his merit as an officer not to acknowledge that I part with him with the greatest regret. He

has also been during that time well seconded by Captains Barrington, Digby, Lendrick, and Balfour.

The "Foudroyant" and "Anson," commanded by Tyrrell and Whitwell, are also sent home on account of the "sickly state of their companies," and also Captain Parry of the "Kingston."

It would seem that the Plymouth authorities and those of the Navy Board had not been much conciliated during the five-days' stay of the fleet in October. The admiral had no sooner returned to his station than he finds his action with reference to a Mr. Wright, the surgeon of the "Nottingham," called in question by the latter body :—

"I have received," says Hawke, "your letter of the 17th instant, in answer to which I am to acquaint you that there was no mistake in Mr. Wright's being ordered by me to be discharged, and the reason marked on the pay list. The 'Nottingham' was wanted at a moment's notice to cruise in the Goulette at Brest, a station which required every man in her to be ready at a call. [There was] No probability of being able to try Wright by a court-martial for his disobedience of orders and other dirty crimes ; nor could I, in the circumstances the ship was then in, hourly, in the face of the enemy, admit of sentries being kept on so worthless a fellow. As the least inconvenience, or rather for the real good of the service, I ordered him to be discharged, and his crime noted on his list of pay, for your information. I shall not enter into a dispute with you about my authority as a commanding officer, neither do I ever think of inconveniences or prejudice to myself, as a party, according to your insinuations, where the good of the service is concerned. Enclosed I send you a letter from Captain Lendrick relating to Wright. By the 'Melampe' this day I have sent in Mr. Joseph Cock, whom you appointed surgeon to the 'Duke.' His infirmities rendering him incapable of his duty, he has applied to be sent home ; the surgeon he was to supersede, though very old, still continues in the ship."

The medical service of the navy was certainly in a bad way; and however high-handed the admiral's conduct towards Mr. Wright would be thought under ordinary circumstances, his chief offence was rank mutiny, publicly committed, and witnessed under the hands of several officers, so that he ought to have been grateful for escaping a court-martial, by the sentence of which he would infallibly have been shot.

Soon afterwards the admiral has to write in an equally indignant strain to the Commanding officer at Plymouth, whose impertinent letter is in the Letter-book. The moment of action is close at hand, and the "ifs" and "ands" of the officers who neglect their duty are absolutely intolerable:—

'May I ask," says Hawke, "what is become of the 'Magnanime,' 'Revenge,' 'Defiance,' 'Coventry,' and 'Actæon'? It would have been greatly for the benefit of the service if they could have been ready to have joined me while the easterly wind lasted. . . . I earnestly desire that immediately on the receipt of this, you will, with any wind, dispatch all the line-of-battle ships that are ready, the frigates, and without fail, two of the best cutters."

Quickly following one another, the admiral now receives despatches informing him that Conflans has had positive orders to put to sea, and engage the English fleet at once; and then, on November 13th that Admiral Cotes, writing on September 9th, two months previously, had reported that Bompart's squadron was just then about to sail, so that it must already be somewhere off the coast. It actually sailed on October 1st. Where was Admiral Geary's squadron now?

But before the admiral could receive this last intelligence he had written (on November 5th):—

I hope their Lordships will not conclude from that remark on my rendezvous in my letter of the 17th, that I should come into port while there should be a possibility of keeping the sea. Single ships may struggle with a hard gale of wind when a squadron cannot. It must always, by wearing, lose ground in working against a strong westerly wind in the Channel, where it cannot make very long stretches, but more especially if it should blow so as to put it past carrying sail. If for the future this should happen I shall put into Torbay, as I cannot be induced to think there is sufficient room for so large a squadron, or water, for the three-decked ships in Plymouth Sound at this season of the year."

Just as before, Hawke had hardly written this letter when a tremendous gale came on from the westward, and after struggling against it for three days, he reports from Torbay, on November 10th, that he "was obliged and lucky enough to get in here last night" with most of the ships. He now recommends the withdrawal of the two line-of-battle ships stationed at Quiberon, thus leaving Duff with his smaller ships as "a more manageable squadron" to preserve itself till my arrival." "It blows a mere frett of wind from the N.W. Bompart, if near, may get in, but no ship can stir from any port of the enemy in the Bay. The instant the weather will admit of it, I shall get to sea again. As boats cannot easily pass I cannot collect the state of the ships." He gets off to sea again on the 12th; is driven into Torbay again on the 13th by the violence of the gale, which is now from S.W.; but once more gets to his station on the 14th. While at Torbay he shifted his flag to the "Royal

George " of 100 guns, with John Campbell for his flag-captain, and leaves behind his favourite old ship the " Ramilies," which became " water-logged whenever it blowed hard." How nearly Hawke's plans, which were supported by Pitt, were frustrated, and thus how nearly the plans of the French had a chance of success, may be gathered from the following anecdote given in Thackeray's " Life of Chatham," * from the "*Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se répose.*" It must, indeed, be only taken for what it is worth, as it rests solely upon anonymous, though contemporary, authority.

" There was a question about sending Hawke to sea to keep watch over M. de Conflans; it was November; the weather was stormy and dangerous for a fleet. Mr. Pitt, in bed with the gout, was obliged to receive those who had business with him in a room where there were two beds, and where there was no fire, for he could not bear one. The Duke of Newcastle [the Prime Minister in name] who was a very chilly person, came to see him on the subject of this fleet, which he was most unwilling to send to sea. He had scarcely entered the room when he cried out, shivering all over with cold :—'How is this? no fire?' 'No,' said Mr. Pitt, 'when I have the gout, I cannot bear one.' The Duke, finding himself obliged to put up with it, took a seat by the bedside of the invalid, wrapped up in his cloak, and began the conversation. But unable to stand the cold for any length of time, he said, 'Pray allow me to protect myself from the cold in that bed you have by your side'; and with-

* Vol. i. p. 448.

out taking off his cloak, he buried himself in Lady Esther Pitt's bed, and continued the conversation. The Duke was strongly opposed to risking the fleet in the November gales; Mr. Pitt was absolutely resolved that it should put to sea; and both argued the matter with much warmth. 'I am positively determined the fleet shall sail,' said Pitt, accompanying his words with the most lively gesticulations. 'It is impossible, it will perish,' replied the Duke, making a thousand contortions. Sir Charles Frederick of the 'Ordnance,' coming in at the moment, found them in this ridiculous position; and had infinite trouble in keeping his countenance when he discovered the two Ministers deliberating on a matter of such great importance in a situation so novel and extraordinary. The fleet nevertheless put to sea; and Mr. Pitt was right, for Admiral Hawke defeated M. de Conflans; and it was the most decisive victory the English gained over France during that war."

But the end was at hand. On the 17th, Hawke reports to the Admiralty that he had heard the previous evening from one of the victuallers that the French had been seen at sea, working to the eastward, having taken advantage of the change of wind which had enabled him to get to his station:—

> I have carried a press of sail all night, with a hard gale at S.S.E., in pursuit of the enemy, and make no doubts of coming up with them either at sea or in Quiberon Bay.

Thus the long-looked-for event had taken place at last. Bompart had sailed into Brest on the wings of a gale which had driven Hawke off his station, and by so doing had proclaimed to Conflans the absence

of his watchful enemy. The French admiral acted with praiseworthy promptitude, put Bompart's experienced seamen on board his own ships, and reckoning on the dispersion of the English fleet, and the unlikelihood of their re-assembling for some time in sufficient numbers to meet his fleet of twenty-one line-of-battle ships, craftily set forth on the 14th, on his way to Quiberon. There he would make short work of Duff's squadron, take up the land forces in their transports at Morbihan, and make a descent on the British coast before Hawke should know where he was. It was an almost desperate plan at that time of the year; but it might have answered had there not been a commander opposed to Conflans whose patience, judgment, and resolution were proof against the wildest elements at sea, and the frauds, neglects, and stupidity of officials on shore. Much to the surprise of the French Hawke and his whole fleet of twenty-three line-of-battle ships, having arrived on the station off Ushant on the very day when Conflans left Brest, were hard at their heels before they could even get in sight of their first destination.

A letter of November 14th, from the young Duke of York, which does him credit, referring to the labours of the blockade, may conclude this chapter :—

Sir Edward Hawke,

It is with the greatest satisfaction I observe the gracious manner [in which] the King has taken notice in his Speech of the important service the fleet under your command has performed; closing up the particulars of all the successful military transactions of this year with his testimony of your having discharged your difficult task in the most effectual manner. And

it gives me the greatest pleasure, interested as I feel myself in whatever regards the service and reputation of the fleet.

I take this opportunity of enquiring after your health, and of desiring my compliments to Sir Charles Hardy, Admiral Geary, Lord Howe, and the rest of your captains. Remaining with great esteem and regard your assured friend,

EDWARD.

I desire my compliments particularly to Captain Taylor. I enclose the Speech.*

Captain Taylor was Hawke's flag-captain all through the period treated in this chapter, but, remaining in the "Ramilies" when Hawke shifted over to the "Royal George," was lost with nearly all the crew of his ship on the Rame Head in February, 1760. Falconer, the author of the "Shipwreck," a midshipman, was the only officer saved, along with twenty-five men.

Let it be remarked by way of comment on the King's Speech, that if the whole circumstances of Hawke's blockade of Brest are compared with those of any other similar blockade, whether by Howe, Jervis, Cornwallis, or even Nelson, it may be considered to have been the most noteworthy of all. This of course can only be a matter of opinion ; but in weighing their respective merits it is not only a question of length of time, but of season, climate, weather, co-operation from the Admiralty, the existing methods as to cleaning ships—for they were not yet coppered,—of sanitary arrangements, and the state of naval progress in signals, navigation, and discipline.

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* Hawke Papers.

LIST OF THE BRITISH AND FRENCH LINE-OF-BATTLE SHIPS IN THE BATTLE OF QUIBERON, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1759.

British :

Ships.	Guns.		
Royal George	100	Sir E. Hawke, Admiral. Captain J. Campbell.	
Union	90	Sir C. Hardy, Vice-Admiral. Captain T. Evans.	
Duke	90	Captain	S. Graves
Namur	90	„	Mat. Buckle.
Mars	74	„	Jas. Young.
Warspight	74	„	Sir J. Bentley.
Hercules	74	„	W. Fortescue.
Torbay	74	„	Hon. A. Keppel.
Magnanime	74	„	Viscount Howe.
Resolution.	74	„	H. Speke.
Hero	74	„	Hon. G. Edgecumb.
Swiftsure	70	„	Sir T. Stanhope.
Dorsetshire	70	„	P. Davies.
Burford	70	„	J. Gambier.
Chichester	70	„	W. S. Willet.
Temple	70	„	Hon. W. Shirley.
Revenge	64	„	John Storr.
Essex	64	„	Lucius O'Brien.
Kingston	60	„	Thomas Shirley.
Intrepid	60	„	Jas. Maplesden.
Montague	60	„	Joseph Rowley.
Dunkirk	60	„	Rob. Digby.
Defiance	60	„	Pat. Baird.

French :

Ships.	Guns.	Ships.	Guns.
Le Soleil Royal	80	L'Intrepide	74
Le Tonnant	80	Le Glorieux	74
Le Formidable	80	Le Thésée	74
L'Orient	80	L'Héros	74

French (continued):

Ships.	Guns.	Ships.	Guns.
Le Robuste	74	Le Sphinx	64
Le Magnifique	74	Le Solitaire	64
Le Juste	70	Le Brilliant	64
Le Superbe	70	L'Eveillé	64
Le Dauphin Royal	70	Le Bizarre	64
Le Dragon	64	L'Inflexible	64
Le Northumberland	64		

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF QUIBERON.
1759.

To print the business-like details of a despatch is far from being a sensational method of giving an account of a great and decisive battle; but in the present case, as in 1747, it is done deliberately. Hawke shall tell his own story. Here is the despatch:—

"ROYAL GEORGE, off Penris Point,

SIR, November 24th, 1759.

In my letter of the 17th by express, I desired you would acquaint their Lordships with my having received intelligence of eighteen sail of the line, and three frigates of the Brest squadron being discovered about twenty-four leagues to the north-west of Belleisle, steering to the eastward. All the prisoners, however, agree that on the day we chased them, their squadron consisted, according to the accompanying list, of four ships of eighty, six of seventy-four, three of seventy, eight of sixty-four, one frigate of thirty-six, one of thirty-four, and one of sixteen guns, with a small vessel to look out. They sailed from Brest the 14th instant, the same day I sailed from Torbay. Concluding that their first rendezvous would be Quiberon, the instant I received the intelligence I directed my course thither with a pressed sail. At first the wind blowing hard at S. b. E. & S. drove us considerably to the westward. But on the 18th and 19th, though variable, it proved more favourable. In the meantime having been joined by the "Maidstone" and "Coventry" frigates, I directed their commanders to keep

ahead of the squadron, one on the starboard, and the other on the larboard bow.

At half-past eight o'clock on the morning of the 20th, Belle-isle, by our reckoning, bearing E. b. N. $\frac{1}{4}$ N. about thirteen leagues, the "Maidstone" made the signal for seeing a fleet. I immediately spread abroad the signal for the line abreast, in order to draw all the ships of the squadron up with me. I had before sent the "Magnanime" ahead to make the land. At three-quarters past nine she made the signal for seeing an enemy. Observing, on my discovering them, that they made off, I threw out the signal for the seven ships nearest them to chase, and draw into a line of battle ahead of me, and endeavour to stop them till the rest of the squadron should come up, who were also to form as they chased, that no time might be lost in the pursuit. That morning they were in chase of the "Rochester," "Chatham," "Portland," "Falkland," "Minerva," "Vengeance," and "Venus," all which joined me about eleven o'clock, and in the evening the "Sapphire" from Quiberon Bay. All the day we had very fresh gales at N.W. and W.N.W. with heavy squalls. Monsieur Conflans kept going off under such sail as all his squadron could carry, and at the same time keep together; while we crowded after him with every sail our ships could bear. At half-past two p.m. the fire beginning ahead, I made the signal for engaging. We were then to the southward of Belleisle, and the French admiral headmost, soon after led round the Cardinals, while his rear was in action. About four o'clock the "Formidable" struck, and a little after, the "Thésée" and "Superbe" were sunk. About five, the "Héros" struck, and came to an anchor, but it blowing hard, no boat could be sent on board her. Night was now come, and being on a part of the coast, among islands and shoals, of which we were totally ignorant, without a pilot, as was the greatest part of the squadron, and blowing hard on a lee shore, I made the signal to anchor, and came-to in fifteen fathom water, the Island of Dumet bearing E. b. N. between two and three miles, the Cardinals W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S., and the steeples of Crozie S.E., as we found next morning.

In the night we heard many guns of distress fired, but, blowing

hard, want of knowledge of the coast, and whether they were fired by a friend or an enemy, prevented all means of relief.

By daybreak of the 21st we discovered one of our ships [the "Resolution"] dismasted, ashore on the Four. The French "Héros" also, and the "Soleil Royal," which under cover of the night had anchored among us, cut and run ashore to the westward of Crozie. On the latter's moving I made the "Essex's" signal to slip and pursue her; but she unfortunately got upon the Four, and both she and the "Resolution" are irrecoverably lost, notwithstanding that we sent them all the assistance that the weather would permit. About fourscore of the "Resolution's" company, in spite of the strongest remonstrances of their captain, made rafts, and with several French prisoners belonging to the "Formidable," put off, and I am afraid drove out to sea. All the "Essex's" are safe, with as many of the stores as possible, except one lieutenant and a boat's crew, who were drove on the French shore, and have not since been heard of. The remains of both ships are set on fire. We found the "Dorsetshire," "Revenge," and "Defiance," in the night of the 20th, put out to sea, as I hope the "Swiftsure" did, for she is still missing. The "Dorsetshire" and "Defiance" returned the next day, and the latter saw the "Revenge" without. Thus what loss we have sustained has been owing to the weather, not the enemy, seven or eight of whose line-of-battle ships got to sea, I believe, the night of the action.

As soon as it was broad daylight, in the morning of the 21st, I discovered seven or eight of the enemy's line-of-battle ships at anchor between Point Penris and the river Vilaine, on which I made the signal to weigh in order to work up and attack them. But it blowed so hard from the N.W. that instead of daring to cast the squadron loose, I was obliged to strike topgallant masts. Most of those ships appeared to be aground at low water. But on the flood, by lightening them, and the advantage of the wind under the land, all, except two, got that night into the river Vilaine.

The weather being moderate on the 22nd, I sent the "Portland," "Chatham," and "Vengeance," to destroy the "Soleil Royal" and "Héros." The French, on the approach of our

ships, set the first on fire ; and soon after, the latter met the same fate from our people. In the meantime I got under way, and worked up within Penris Point, as well for the sake of its being a safer road as to destroy, if possible, the two ships of the enemy which still lay without the river Vilaine. But before the ships I sent ahead for that purpose could get near them, being quite light, and with the tide of flood, they got in.

All the 23rd we were occupied in reconnoitring the entrance of that river, which is very narrow, and only twelve foot water on the bar at low water. We discovered seven if not eight line-of-battle ships, about half a mile within, quite light, and two large frigates moored across to defend the mouth of the river. Only the frigates appeared to have guns in. By evening I had twelve long boats fitted as fireships ready to attempt burning them under cover of the "Sapphire" and "Coventry." But the weather being bad, and the wind contrary, obliged me to defer it till at least the latter should be favourable. If they can by any means be destroyed it shall be done.

In attacking a flying enemy, it was impossible in the space of a short winter's day that all our ships should be able to get into action, or all those of the enemy brought to it. The commanders and companies of such as did come up with the rear of the French on the 20th behaved with the greatest intrepidity, and gave the strongest proofs of a true British spirit. In the same manner I am satisfied would those who have acquitted themselves whom bad-going ships, or the distance they were at in the morning, prevented from getting up.

Our loss by the enemy is not considerable. For in the ships which are now with me, I find only one lieutenant and fifty seamen and marines killed, and about two hundred and twenty wounded.

When I consider the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the shortness of the day, and the coast they were on, I can boldly affirm that all that could possibly be done has been done. As to the loss we have sustained, let it be placed to the account of the necessity I was under of running all risks to break this strong force of the enemy. Had we had but two hours more daylight, the whole

had been totally destroyed or taken ; for we were almost up with their van when night overtook us.

Yesterday came in here the "Pallas," "Fortune" sloop, and the "Proserpine" fireship. On the 16th I had dispatched the "Fortune" to Quiberon, with directions to Captain Duff to keep strictly on his guard. In her way thither she fell in with the "Hebe," a French frigate of forty guns, under jury masts, and fought her several hours. During the engagement Lieutenant Stuart, second of the "Ramilies," whom I had appointed to command her was unfortunately killed. The surviving officers, on consulting together, resolved to leave her, as she proved too strong for them. I have detached Captain Young to Quiberon Bay, with five ships, and am making up a flying squadron to scour the coast to the southward, as far as the Isle of Aix ; and if practicable, to attempt any of the enemy's ships that may be there.

I am, &c.,

EDWARD HAWKE.

A supplementary despatch, on December 1st, adds :—

The manœuvres of the enemy crowding away on the 20th, prevented our being able to reckon their number exactly. Now I can with certainty assure their lordships that their squadron consisted of twenty-one sail of the line, with more seamen and soldiers than I gave in the list which accompanied my last. To the number destroyed I can also add the "Juste" of seventy guns [wrecked on the Charpentier] ; and I am in hopes, too, to find the "Magnifique" run ashore or lost, for she was terribly shattered. The "Dorsetshire," "Swiftsure," "Revenge," and "Magnanime" want great repairs. . . . Enclosed is a list of officers I have appointed to act in vacancies. I must only add that I should be greatly obliged to their lordships to remember Lieutenant Thomas Neilson, first of the "Ramilies," now commanding the "Success." He has been upwards of nineteen years a lieutenant, upwards of three of which he has been an officer with me.

It is not wonderful that the circumstances of the

battle thus modestly, and even apologetically, described by the chief actor in it, should have beguiled contemporary writers into flights of rhetoric which display the character of poetry rather than prose. The historian of the war describes the

"billows, mountains high," before which Hawke's fleet "sailed upon the wings of the wind, till he descried the enemy fluttering at his appearance like a bird at the sight of a Hawke," and then how, "descending from the summits of watery mountains, they pounced the enemy, and never parted with them till this mighty fleet was totally destroyed, and in its ruins was buried the maritime power of France. . . . Admiral Hawke, who had long been the darling of the people of England for his abilities and courage at sea, . . . amidst all the horrors of two enraged elements, began a furious engagement."*

And other writers are not far behind.

Horace Walpole is for once betrayed into admiration of Hawke:—

It was the 20th of November: the shortness of the day prevented the total demolition of the enemy; but neither darkness nor a dreadful tempest that ensued could call off Sir Edward from pursuing his blow. The roaring of the elements was redoubled by the thunder from our ships; and both concurred, in that scene of horror, to put a period to the navy and the hopes of France.†

And Smollett describes it as

one of the most perilous and important actions that ever happened in any war between the two nations; for it not only defeated the projected invasion, which had hung menacing so long over the apprehensions of Great Britain, but it gave the finishing blow to the naval power of France. ‡

* Entick's "History of the War."
† "Memoirs of George II."
‡ "History of England."

It was no doubt a scene calculated in itself to excite the imagination in the highest degree ; and when contemplated in connection with the previous dread which the French invading force had inspired, with the incidence of the very gales for which it was known that the enemy was anxiously waiting, with the fact of the British fleet having been driven off its station three separate times in a few weeks, and, latterly, with the information that had reached England that the French had actually put to sea, while it was for days unknown whether Hawke had caught them, it is easy to see that the responsibility which had rested on his shoulders greatly added to the effect produced by the glorious news. The writer of the history of the war is certainly correct in saying that "to such a pitch were the people of England incensed by the opportunity given to M. Conflans on the retreat of Admiral Hawke from the bay, that they would have allowed no excuse, nor considered the irresistible power of the winds and the seas that drove him home, but made him responsible for his misfortunes." He might have added that the alarm and terror of the populace were such that, on the very day of the victory, a mob was burning him in effigy as a traitor and coward for letting the French get out of Brest.

The burden of this responsibility every officer entrusted with the decision of great issues expects to bear ; but in the present case it is not easy to decide which to admire most, the successful struggle for six months with the almost infinite difficulties of the situation, or the grand decisiveness of the final resolution when the moment for action arrived. The

least weakness in giving way to the traditions of bureaucracy on the questions of victualling, cleaning, and despatching back again his ships, would have left Hawke powerless on the day of battle, with sick crews, ships that would not sail, and officers worn out with the endless fatigues of cruising in gales of wind and on a lee shore. The least failure of self-reliance, the least attention to the officious suggestions that beset an admiral in such a time of excitement, the least relaxation of the steady discipline and even-tempered rule which, neglecting no detail, impresses every man in a fleet, from highest to lowest, with a desire to do his duty, and yet spreads around the cheerful spirit produced by human sympathy on the part of the chief, would in all probability have told fatally in such a prolonged conflict.

And it may here be remarked that there is not a single case of a great naval officer, however passionately favoured by the people, having escaped at some perilous moment of his career the violent and often brutal denunciations of its lower ranks. Rodney and Howe suffered in this way much as Hawke had suffered, and even Nelson's popularity fell to zero when for many months he had failed to find the French fleet which carried Napoleon to Egypt. Nor should the conduct which is the effect of impulsive ignorance and terror be too much condemned. In the last resort a people's instinct tells them that they must make themselves felt; a free country cannot afford to choke such impulses; a really great administrator or warrior does not do his duty the worse for the feeling that he has a rope round his neck.

But what of the venture on which Hawke made up his mind to stake the fortunes of Great Britain, and to "stand the hazard of the die"? How many of even the greatest officers would have thought it right to follow up a flying enemy, at the close of a brief November day, into a dangerous bay, the navigation of which, though familiar enough to the enemy, was wholly unknown to himself and every one of his officers? A thousand reasons might be given for hauling off, and waiting for a better opportunity. Doubts were entertained by many at that time whether anything but success could justify such temerity. But this was exactly the stroke of genius which might be expected from a Blake, a Nelson, or a Cochrane, and from these alone. It was a profoundly calculated venture. The peculiar peril of the moment must be balanced against the end to be obtained, and viewed in connection with the difficulty there would be in getting at the enemy if he were not summarily dealt with there and then. Just as Nelson said at Aboukir:—"Where there is room for the enemy to swing, there is room for me to anchor,"—so, long before him, argued Hawke:—"Where there is a passage for the enemy, there is a passage for me. We are so close up to them that their pilots shall be ours. If they go to pieces on the shoals they will serve as beacons. If they have the advantage of knowing the way, we have that of superior seamanship and gunnery when we overtake them. The perils of a lee shore are theirs as well as ours." In short, he considered, as he says in his despatch, that he was "under the necessity of running all risks to break this strong force of the enemy"; he had fairly calculated those risks; and

though he lost two line-of-battle ships in the process, it cannot be said that the price was to be grudged in the achievement of such a magnificent result. It was in this spirit that he made the well-known reply to the master of his ship, who, believing it would wreck the "Royal George" upon a shoal, had remonstrated with him upon his order to lay the ship alongside of the French admiral:—"You have done your duty, sir, in showing the danger: you are now to comply with my order, and lay me alongside the 'Soleil Royal.'" It was in this spirit that, just as in the battle of 1747, he made it a point of honour to fight his own ship like any of his captains, and to expose them to no danger which he was not to share with them. It was with a view to this very contingency that he instructed his officers that "he was for the old way [his own old way] of fighting, to make downright work with them."*

It will at once be seen that the place of this battle in history must not be measured by the number of ships captured in actual battle, but by the ultimate fate of the enemy's ships, by the unparalleled circumstances of the engagement, and by the effect it had upon the maritime power of France. With the little daylight left when the ten ships that were near enough the enemy to engage entered the Bay, Hawke could not reckon on more than a partial victory at the moment; what he did reckon upon, and with justice, was that the Frenchmen would act as they did in the previous year, and destroy themselves in their frantic efforts to fly to a place of safety. Besides the six line-

* See p. 232.

of-battle ships taken, burnt, or run on shore in the battle, seven got beyond his reach by throwing overboard guns and stores, and being hauled into the Vilaine through the mud ; but only three of these were eventually saved, the remainder having broken their backs by taking the ground at every tide. As for the remainder of the fleet, which succeeded, during the pitchy darkness of the wild November night, in escaping to Rochefort, Keppel, who was immediately sent with a squadron to look after them, soon returned with the report that they had taken refuge, as in 1758, high up the Charente :—

> The situation and distance of the nearest of the enemy's ships was such as rendered it impracticable to offer an attempt upon them, they being further up by miles than any ship can go without warping through the mud and being dismantled.

Ships in this state were as good as destroyed,—at least for many months to come.

Thus the whole fleet, with all the 18,000 troops, and all the elaborate preparations for invasion, was completely crushed and disposed of at a blow. The victory of Trafalgar was not in reality more decisive, nor were the means adopted by Nelson for that splendid result a whit more to be admired than the tactics pursued by Hawke for the purpose in hand. There was scarcely wind enough to fill the sails when Nelson made his celebrated signal, and Collingwood excited his admiration by the way he led in towards the enemy ; it was blowing a heavy gale on a lee shore—the situation of all others most dreaded by seamen—when Hawke swooped upon his prey in the midst of an unknown network of shoals, terrible

enough at all times, but involving certain destruction, as the event showed, to ships which ran ashore upon them in a raging sea.

The reader may now like to observe the impression made upon the mind of a gallant and intelligent non-combatant present at the battle. In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1759 appeared the following letter from "a Chaplain of one of His Majesty's ships." [The Rev. Robert English, M.A., who died at Norwich in 1784.]

QUIBERON BAY, November 25, 1759.

I most heartily congratulate you upon the great event of our defeating Marshal Conflans on the 20th instant. As the express is on the point of setting out, my relation of the victory cannot be particular. On the 14th November, Sir Edward Hawke hoisted his flag on board the "Royal George" in Torbay, where the fleet had put in a few days before, through stress of weather. The same evening we stood out to sea, with twenty-three ships of the line and two frigates; and on the 16th were within eight or nine leagues of the isle of Ushant. In the afternoon we fell in with some English transports returning from Quiberon, who gave the Admiral the information that they saw the French fleet the day before, consisting of 24 sail, standing to the S.E., and were at that time 24 leagues west of Belleisle. The intelligence was received with universal acclamations, and every ship prepared for action. The Admiral lost not a minute of time, but pursued with the utmost alertness. In the evening of the 18th the wind came on fresh from the westward, and we spread all our canvas to court the prosperous gale. On the 20th, about half-an-hour after eight in the morning, the "Maidstone" frigate let fly her topgallant-sails [? topgallant sheets] which was a signal for discovering a fleet; at nine, not a doubt was left of the happy hour being arrived which we had six months been impatiently expecting. We ascertained them to be the French squadron of twenty-one sail of the line, and three smaller ships; and that they were then

chasing Captain Duff's frigates and bombs, the destruction of which was one object of their destination. Upon their having a distincter view of our ships, they gave over the chase, and appeared to be forming a line to receive us.

From the equality of combatants, we concluded the action would be very great and general ; but I may venture to assert, there was not an Englishman from high to low, who did not assure himself of victory. Upon our advancing, Marshal Conflans changed his plans, and put right before the wind towards the shore, seeking safety in his flight. At this critical time Sir Edward paid no regard to lines of battle ; but every ship was directed to make the best of her way towards the enemy ; the Admiral told his officers he was for the old way of fighting, to make downright work with them. At noon our headmost ships were pretty near them, and between one and two the "Warspite" [Sir John Bentley] and the "Dorsetshire" [Denis] began to fire, and were then abreast of the Cardinal rocks. Presently after, the "Revenge" [Storr], "Resolution" [Speke], "Torbay" [Keppel], "Magnanime" [Lord Howe], "Swiftsure" [Sir Thomas Stanhope], "Montagu" [Rowley], and "Defiance" [Baird], came into action.

The firing now became very alert on both sides, and there was no distinguishing any longer English colours from French. M. du Verger, the French rear-admiral, in the "Formidable" bore a very fierce cannonade from the "Resolution" ; but upon the "Royal George's" coming up, they hauled down their flag, and struck to Sir Edward Hawke. This was only a point of honour, the "Resolution" having the merit of subduing them. The "Royal George" continued advancing, and Sir Edward gave orders to his Master to carry him close alongside of M. Conflans in the "Soleil Royal." The French admiral seemed to have the same ambition on his part, and it was a glorious sight to behold the blue and white flags, both at the maintopmast-head, bearing down to each other. The "Royal George" passed the "Torbay," which was closely engaged with the "Thésée" of seventy-four guns, and soon after sent that unfortunate ship to the bottom. On the other side was the "Magnanime," who kept an incessant fire on one of the largest of the French ships ["l'Héros"], and n

the end obliged her to strike. She afterwards ran ashore and was burnt.

The two commanders-in-chief were now very near, and M. Conflans gave the English admiral his broadside ; the "Royal George" returned the uncivil salutation ; but after two or three exchanges of this kind, the Marshal of France declined the combat, and steered off. The French vice-admiral [De Beaufremont in "Le Tonnant"] likewise gave Sir Edward his broadside, and soon followed the example of his superior. Another and another acted the same part ; the fifth ship ["Le Superbe"] escaped not so well. Sir Edward poured his whole fire into her at once, and repeating the same, down she went along-side of him. The "Royal George's" people gave a cheer, but it was a faint one ; the honest sailors were touched at the miserable state of so many hundreds of poor creatures. The blue flag was now encountered with seven ships at the same time, and appeared in the very centre of the French rear. Every observer pitied the "Royal George," to see her singly engaged against so many of the enemy. It seems indeed a kind of degradation to so noble a ship to be pitied ; but really her situation would have been lamentable if the enemy had preserved any degree of composure, or fired with any sort of direction ; but their confusion was so great, that of many hundreds of shot, I do not believe that more than thirty or forty struck the ship.

Sir Charles Hardy, in the "Union," with the "Mars," "Hero," and several other ships, were crowding to the admiral's assistance, when the retreat of the French, covered by the obscurity of the evening, put an end to the engagement. Happy circumstance for the enemy, as an hour's daylight more would have brought on their total ruin !

The battle was fought so near the coast of Brittany, that ten thousand persons on the shore were sad witnesses of the white flag's disgrace.

When I sat down to write I intended to have given you only a general account, but upon such an animating occasion as this, there is no possibility of leaving off whilst a margin remains unoccupied. We have burnt the "Soleil Royal" of eighty-four brass guns, M. Conflans' ship, together with the "Héros" of

seventy-four guns, both of which ran ashore near Crozie. We have sunk the "Thésée" of seventy-four, and the "Superbe" of seventy; we have driven the "Juste" of seventy guns upon the rocks, where she overset; and have taken the "Formidable" of eighty, the French rear-admiral, sixty-two of whose guns are brass. Ten or eleven other ships were aground, but got off again by throwing their guns and stores overboard. They are now crept into the entrance of the little river Vilaine, where we do not despair of setting them on fire. Whether we succeed in this or not, we have room to believe they have undergone so much damage that few of them will be able to put to sea any more. The rest made their escape the night after the engagement, under the command of Mons. Beaufremont, their vice-admiral, and stretched away for Rochefort.

We have had the misfortune to lose the victorious "Resolution" of seventy-four guns, and the "Essex" of sixty-four; the former struck upon a sand called Le Four the night after the battle, and next morning the "Essex," going down to her relief, unhappily ran upon the same shoal. Our endeavours to get them off were unsuccessful, but we have this consolation, that almost all their people are saved, and are embarked on board the "Formidable."

I should be esteemed a very unjust historian if I omitted to make known to you that Captain Denis of the "Dorsetshire," and Captain Speke of the "Resolution," have acquired immortal honour: the admiral told them in the warmth of his gratitude, they had behaved like angels. I would in this place attempt the most honourable mention of Sir Edward Hawke; nor would I by any means omit my Lord Howe, and Captain Keppel; neither should Captain Campbell pass unnoticed, but that there was a certain greatness in their behaviour which exceeds the ability of my pen to celebrate. I have particularised only a few names, as some of the ships were more immediately under my observation. There were many others had a considerable share in the action, and will doubtless be honoured by those who were more connected with them. It gives me a most sensible pleasure to assure you that Sir Edward has been very liberal in his praises without a single imputation to cast a shade upon the triumph

of the day. The glory of the British flag has been nobly supported, while that of the enemy is vanished into empty air.

The remarkable accuracy of this letter in all main particulars gives it a special value, and suggests a few remarks.

As a pendant to the picture presented by the writer of the marks of joy displayed at the prospect of at last bringing the French to action, may be mentioned the ecstatic proceeding of the crew of the "Rochester" frigate, carrying the broad pendant of Captain Duff, one of whose squadron was just within the very jaws of a French seventy-four when Hawke's fleet was descried from the mast-head. They not only gave the accustomed three cheers, but there was "scarce a man but threw his hat overboard as a sort of defiance to the enemy. The other ships of this little fleet followed the example set them by the commodore's ship."*

DUFF'S SQUADRON.

Ships.	Guns.		
Rochester	50	Commodore	R. Duff.
Belliqueux	64	Captain	P. Saumarez.
Portland	50	„	M. Arbuthnot.
Falkland	50	„	F. S. Drake.
Chatham	50	„	John Lockhart.
Venus	36	„	T. Harrison.
Minerva	32	„	A. Hood.
Sapphire	32	„	J. Strachan.
Vengeance	28	„	G. Nightingale.
Coventry	28	„	F. Burstow.
Maidstone	28	„	Dudley Digges.

It may next be remarked that the chaplain's state-

* Beatson, vol. ii. p. 333.

ment, confirmed by all other good authorities, disposes of that generally copied from Horace Walpole, viz., that only eight ships were engaged in the battle. This is as inaccurate as a great deal of that writer's gossip turns out, when sifted, to be ; for there were certainly ten in the action, and it is of a piece with his statement that Hawke, when driven off his station to Torbay, had "retired to Gibraltar to refit." But in the case of the "Magnanime" the "chaplain" hardly does justice to Howe, who led the fleet to battle, who after a fine attempt on the "Formidable," frustrated by two English ships in succession falling foul of him, attacked the "Thésée" (the ship which afterwards, with 800 men, sank under Keppel's broadsides), and finally engaged the "Héros" till she struck. Also in assigning the merit of the capture of the "Formidable" to Denis in the "Resolution," he omits to notice the share which Keppel in the "Torbay" had taken in "silencing" her, as Keppel himself claims in his log to have done.* But these are trifling omissions in an account which it is wonderful that anyone could have written from his own observation on such an awful day, and sent off before he could well have consulted any but the officers of his own ship.

It has been supposed that the French vice-admiral went off with his squadron to Rochefort at the time he did with a design to draw the English ships into the dangers of the narrow passage by which he escaped, and that Hawke's fleet was exposed to the danger of being crushed in detail by these ships if they

* Keppel's "Life of Lord Keppel," vol. i. p. 284.

had doubled back into the Bay.* But that is to suppose a skill and spirit on the part of the French which are quite beyond human nature. The gale was still in its full fury. The vice-admiral's squadron, flying from its enemy, could not by any possibility know, on the morning of the next day, how the English fleet was situated; and no ships in the world would venture to throw themselves into the midst of a force of twice their number, and already victorious, even though a good deal scattered by the darkness of the night, and by the state of the weather which made it impossible that the admiral's signal to anchor should be understood. That night was indeed terrible both to the victors and the vanquished. It has been well described in the following words:—

> The dangers of the coast, the darkness of the night, the fury of the tempest, all united to perplex the scattered fleets both of England and France. Although minute guns were heard on every side, yet none could afford relief of either friend or foe. To the bellowing of the waves from below, and the thunders of heaven from above, was added the constant roar of cannon from the ships.†

The Captain Campbell who is quaintly classed with Hawke, Howe, Keppel, Denis, and Speke, as men whose "greatness in their behaviour exceeds the ability of the writer's pen to celebrate," was a very remarkable Scotchman who had risen from the ranks, and about whom many good stories were told. He was a thorough seaman as well as scientific astrono-

* Beatson, vol. ii. p. 331; Thackeray's "Life of Chatham," vol. i. p. 451.

† Thackeray's "Chatham," vol. i. p. 451.

mer; and no doubt his cool head and experienced eye were of great service to the admiral in the supreme hour of trial. He carried home the despatches. Many years afterwards, though then an admiral, he volunteered to serve under his old friend Keppel as "First Captain," on the celebrated occasion of that officer's command in 1778; and his spirited offer was thankfully accepted.

One more incident, or rather accompaniment of this famous battle, which was much talked about, must be mentioned. The gallant Admiral Saunders happened to arrive in the Channel from his distinguished service at Quebec, just after Hawke had sailed from Torbay; and on hearing of it, without waiting for orders, altered his course and made all sail, along with the rest of his squadron, to join his old friend and fight by his side at Quiberon. He was too late; but the circumstance was remembered.

The remark with which the chaplain concludes his letter is important and suggestive. When had a great naval battle been fought without a single captain being even suspected of misbehaviour, neglect, or cowardice? We have seen such things in later times, but by no means always. Here is the common mark of identity between the management of fleets by a Hawke and a Nelson. The whole body was animated by one spirit; and the process by which such a result was attained is obviously traceable. It was felt in the light hand of the skilful rider, the grasp of whose reins was never for a moment relaxed, the perfect example of devotion to

duty, the pains bestowed upon little things as well as great, and the resolution that previous counsels, as well as dangers on the day of battle, should be shared by all alike.

The necessary courts-martial which were held at Quiberon in January 1760, on Captain Lucius O'Brien of the "Essex" and Captain Henry Speke of the "Resolution," for the loss of their ships, issued in their honourable acquittal. They had no pilot, no "Neptune Français." "There was so much sea that boats could not live in it." "The sea went so high," said O'Brien, "that no boats could come to my assistance." It was a marvel that so many lives were saved. Of the two unhappy French ships that went down in the heavy seaway, under the fire of the "Royal George" and the "Torbay," scarcely any of the crews survived. The crews of the other French ships, on the contrary, managed to reach land; and the escape of the people of "l'Héros," without being surrendered as prisoners who might be exchanged for some of the English from the two wrecked ships, formed the subject of an angry correspondence.

A reader acquainted with the subject might be surprised at the non-appearance in this place of the despatch said to have been transmitted to the French Government by M. de Conflans, giving an account of his defeat with a plausible audacity which throws Napoleon's bulletins into the shade. It was printed by Campbell, Beatson, and other writers of the period, while Smollett scornfully threw the discredit of it on the shoulders of the French Government; but a note in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1781

declared the letter to be "spurious, being a *jeu d'esprit* of an officer of the 'Torbay'"; which is indeed by far the most probable account of it. It is a pity to load with further disgrace the memory of a man who is sufficiently condemned by his own countrymen. "This deplorable catastrophe," says M. Martin, "consummated the humiliation of France. The navy, whose honour had hitherto been intact, fell to the level of the land forces. The corruption, effeminacy, and selfishness of the Court now penetrated the military, and then carried away the naval, nobility." One of the three admirals, however, M. du Verger, deserved to rank with the best officers; for he fought the "Formidable" against overwhelming odds, and fell at his post like a gallant Frenchman. Conflans had also hitherto proved himself one of the best men the French navy possessed.

If the naval Commander-in-Chief of the French fleet did not shine upon this occasion, what shall we say of the commander of the troops? This was the Duc d'Aiguillon, one of the most notorious characters of the period. He was as yet rather favourably known to the English; for it was no business of theirs that he excited ridicule by witnessing, from the safe elevation of a distant windmill, the defeat of the English rear-guard at St. Cas by the troops he commanded—"*vainqueur malgrê lui*"; and he had shown great courtesy to the officers who had been taken prisoners on that occasion. If he was nothing else, he was a man of the most imposing presence, and possessed of all the arts which found favour at the French Court.

On the present occasion Sir Edward Hawke had written to him, begging that he would cause enquiry to be made for the lieutenant and boat's crew of the "Essex" who had been driven on shore, and for the men belonging to the "Resolution," who had deserted the ship on a raft,—in order that they might be exchanged with the prisoners he had taken in the "Formidable." Lord Howe had been the medium of communication, and everything was satisfactorily arranged; but when the English admiral had sent his prisonèrs on shore on parole, he was surprised to find that no Englishmen were delivered up according to the agreement, especially as one at least of them was known to be imprisoned. Still further, more than a fortnight had elapsed, and none of the crew of "l'Héros," the ship which had struck to Howe, had been surrendered. Of this Hawke complained to the duke, on December 8th, in the most courteous terms. In the mean time he had sent Captain Ourry, of the "Actæon" frigate, to recover the guns of "l'Héros"; and he, having been fired upon during the operation, had returned the fire, and burnt part of the town of Crozic. The duke had replied on December 11th to Hawke's letter, justifying the action of his officers in firing on the ship, complaining of the fire being returned, and making the attempt to recover the guns an excuse for not complying with the terms agreed upon. This was too much for the admiral, who replied with a severity far from undeserved, and in a style wholly foreign to his nature, but evidently assumed for the occasion:—

"Royal George."
12th December, 1759.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 11th instant, in answer to which I beg leave to acquaint you that Captain Ourry has acted entirely by my order, and that I approve of what he has done. His manifesto, of which your Grace has transmitted me a copy, is sufficient proof of his humanity and the tenderness of my orders, which were not to fire unless he should be fired upon.

Without further recollection I need only have recourse to my letter to your Grace of the 29th November by Lord Howe, with regard to the "Héros." My words are, "I therefore claim these officers and men prisoners, and expect from your Grace's known honour that they will be delivered up to me." The hull and guns were not mentioned; for the first I had set on fire, and the second I look on as in my own power to recover. Let me further beg your Grace to look over the agreement you signed with Lord Howe. Is the artillery so much as mentioned in it? No; every article I have strictly observed; exchanged seamen, released officers, soldiers, and militia, on the terms of the Cartel, and sent the Gardes Marines on shore on parole. I could not help being surprised that no notice was taken in that agreement of the claims of the "Héros'" officers and men, and was answered:—that matter belonged to another department, not to your Grace's, which occasioned my writing to you again on that subject. I can only further assure your Grace that had a captain of a British man-of-war under my command begged quarter and surrendered to the French, and afterwards run away with his ship, in open breach of the rules of war, I would have immediately delivered up the ship with the commander to have been treated as the forfeiture of his honour deserved. The same I should have expected from the Duc d'Aiguillon, if I did not consider him the subject of a State in which the will of the monarch constitutes right and wrong.

I assure your Grace, upon my honour, that I never heard of any memorial to be presented to the Admiralty of England, who have no concern in matters of this kind. By the bounty of the

King British seamen are entitled to everything surrendered by, and taken from, an enemy in war. In their names, and for their benefit, I shall endeavour to recover the "Héros'" guns, as also those of the "Soleil Royal," which was deserted and left to our mercy. The delivery of the officers and men is all that depends at present on the honour of your Court; the artillery are within our reach. Our endeavours to take them away being justifiable, I was in hopes would not have been interrupted; but since your Grace and the Marquis de Broc have though fit to fire on my ships, I shall take as severe a revenge as I can, as soon as I receive supplies from Britain.

For I came out near eight months ago, only furnished with orders to decide the fate of the two nations with M. de Conflans on the open sea; but when we met, as he did not choose to stay for me, he has thereby changed the nature of my military operations, and reduced me to the necessity—entirely repugnant to my natural disposition—of sending fire and sword into that country from whence your Grace, with forty battalions under your command, by the authenticated instructions of Marshal Belleisle, was to have spread the most dreadful calamities of war in Great Britain or Ireland.

I cannot persuade myself your Grace could be serious when you termed my enterprise irregular. It was merriment; and I shall not be surprised, if in the same *gaiété du cœur*, I should be accused of acting irregularly in attacking M. de Conflans, after a chase of twenty leagues in the open sea, within your islands and on your coast, and in setting fire to the "Soleil Royal."

As an individual I honour and respect the Duc d'Aiguillon; as commander of a British squadron against a declared enemy I strictly obey the orders of the great King, my Master; only following my own judgment as circumstances may alter.

I have the honour to be, with the most profound respect and regard, your Grace's most humble and most obedient servant,

EDWARD HAWKE.*

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* Hawke Papers.

It has been the more necessary to copy this letter, since, though correctly given in Beatson's collection (with a few slight verbal errors), there is another version among the Hawke MSS., which appears to have been circulated in English newspapers, and which, being apparently drawn from a confused memory, aided by a lively imagination, is a coarse and inferior production.

Of the Duke when he became more known in later years, there was, if we may trust the "Annual Register" and Walpole's works, but one opinion. He was an "undisguised profligate, proud, ambitious, vindictive, void of honour or principle." "His maladministration of Brittany was an appropriate prelude to his career as President of the Council. In both offices he incurred universal hatred and contempt." His shocking treatment of the virtuous M. de Chalotais, and his close alliance with the infamous Du Barri, were perhaps the points which excited most indignation in England, but the above correspondence indicates with tolerable certainty the character of the man who was afterwards to display it on a larger scale.

Hawke's subsequent letters from Quiberon dwell on the failure of supplies of provisions and all necessaries from England, which was partly perhaps owing to the Easterly gales, but no doubt also to the neglect which had so often been exposed. He is obliged to remonstrate with the officers in charge at Plymouth for sending out several ships unfit for service, and on board of them

fourscore of the "Ramilies'" company. These poor fellows had been cruising near seven months, and wanted rest and refresh-

ment. I desire you will not break in upon her crew, as you must thereby disable her at a time when she is much wanted.

But by the error of the officer the lives of these men were saved; for two months later the "Ramilies" was wrecked and nearly all hands lost. The distressing want of provisions here described, occurring so soon after a great victory, was the origin of the well-known epigram :—

Ere Hawke did bang
Monsieur Conflans,
You sent us beef and beer ;
Now Monsieur's beat
We've nought to eat,
Since you have nought to fear.

Hawke's health was now failing. Writing on December 16th, he says :—

I have now been thirty-one weeks on board, without setting my foot on shore, and cannot expect that my health will hold out much longer. I therefore hope to be relieved.

It will be remembered that he had already broken down more than once. It was not however till January 17th, 1760, that he returned to England with his victorious fleet. Meanwhile, the most rapturous expressions of joy at the glorious conclusion of a long and anxious suspense had broken out, on the arrival of the good news, in every form of bonfire and illumination known to the age. No victory during the war came home to the people so much in the light of a deliverance as this : others had conquered, Hawke had saved. All their late alarms were forgotten ; and perhaps till the time of Nelson (unless the rejoicings on Rodney's victory are to be excepted), no one more distinctly received the acclamations which answered

to the military triumph of the Romans. The cases of Vernon and Keppel, who were the momentary idols of the mob, cannot be considered as exceptions; for the one lost his petty wreath of laurels as soon as he had gained it, and the feeling about the other was a mere personal and political enthusiasm for a favourite admiral, who was considered to have been persecuted by political opponents. Yet if we were to judge by the signboards still existing on public-houses, those are the only English admirals, besides Nelson, who have ever sustained the honour of their country.

The first letter Hawke must have received was the following from Lord Anson:—

ADMIRALTY,

DEAR SIR EDWARD, December 1st, 1759.

I have the utmost satisfaction in assuring you that the arrival of Captain Campbell, with the good news of the success and glory which has just crowned your long and worthy labours for the public service, has given the most general joy and satisfaction here. His Majesty extremely approves every part of your conduct, and the behaviour of your whole fleet, and is fully satisfied that nothing was omitted which could be done to gain and improve the victory. It is his gracious intention to recompense a service of so much honour and importance. I am authorised by the Duke of Newcastle to acquaint you that a Grant is proposed and agreed to, of fifteen hundred pounds per annum, to you and your family for thirty-one years, the longest term the King can grant,* &c., &c.

This sum was increased to £2,000 a year, and assigned for the lives of the admiral's two sons. On the 21st he was received at Court in the most marked manner, the King "meeting him as he entered the room,

* Hawke Papers.

and thanking him for the services he had rendered his country." On the 28th he received the thanks of the House of Commons. The Speaker made use during his speech of the following expressions:—"Your expedition was for the nearest and most affecting concern to us—the immediate defence of His Majesty's kingdoms against a disappointed and enraged enemy, meditating in their revenge our destruction at once. Your trust, therefore, sir, was of the highest nature; but to which your characters of courage, fidelity, vigilance, and abilities were known to be equal. You soon freed us from fears. . . . You have overawed the enemy in their ports, in their chief naval force; till shame or perhaps desperation, brought them forth at last. You fought them, subdued them, and in their confusion and dismay, made those who would escape to seek their security in flight and disgrace. Thus their long preparing invasion was then broken and dispelled; which cannot but bring to our remembrance the design and the fate of another Armada in a former age of glory, where defeat was at that time the safety of England, and the lasting renown of the English Navy." Hawke replied in the usual modest terms. The following short note from the aged statesman, Lord Granville, may perhaps have touched him as much as this expression of national gratitude:—

Lord Granville sends his compliments to Sir Edward Hawke, and congratulates him on his safe arrival after a long, laborious, glorious, and ever-memorable campaign, for which service his country cannot be too grateful.*

* Hawke Papers.

Another letter, a child's scrawl, written in pencil, and traced over in ink, has also been preserved :—

SIR EDWARD HAWKE,

I hear you have beat the French fleet when they were coming to kill us, and that one of your captains twisted a French ship round till it sunk. I wish you was come home, for I intend to go to sea if you will take me with you.

I am Lord Granby's second son,

CHARLES MANNERS.*

The subsequent grants of the Peerage to officers for services almost infinitely below those which Hawke had performed, made during the period of years which has since passed, must naturally raise the question why nothing of the sort seems to have been thought of in this case. It could not be for want of precedents, when we consider the cases of Lords Torrington and Anson ; nor for want of means to support the rank ; for, high-minded as Hawke had always proved himself, he had made some prize-money, had a fortune of his own, and the pension now assigned him went far in those days. We are driven to attribute what was certainly disgraceful to the Government, to Hawke's simple-minded abstinence from all political intrigue and self-assertion, on the one hand, and to the enemies which his straightforward conduct had made at the Admiralty and elsewhere, on the other. We have discussed his relations

* Hawke Papers. This child became, by the death of his brother, Lord John, in 1760, the eldest son of the good and popular Marquis of Granby, and eventually Duke of Rutland. His younger brother, Lord Robert, commanded a ship in Rodney's glorious action of 1782, and the monument erected in honour of him and his comrades, slain in that battle, is familiar to all visitors of Westminster Abbey.

with Pitt, with whom he was certainly not a favourite; nor was Anson, after all that had passed, at all likely to be an ardent friend in a matter of this sort; and the excuse was at hand that Boscawen and Saunders might think themselves ill used if Hawke were made a peer. Yet he was not only their senior, but, as we have seen, their services could not be compared with his. It was not for seventeen years that the Government did at last what ought to have been done at first.

Two interesting circumstances are connected with the honours and the pension conferred on Hawke. The address of the Speaker and the admiral's answer excited such public interest that they were printed in the London newspapers. As the struggle for the publication of debates had not yet commenced, and the House still jealously guarded its privileges, the printers of all these newspapers had to beg pardon on their knees at the bar of the House and to pay their fees.

The other incident does credit to the Irish people, with whom Hawke had not the remotest connection except by his public services. The pension had been assigned on the Irish Revenues; and it was thought appropriate because the invasion had been understood to be directed against that island, though some French authors believe that it was really intended for Scotland.

It was the only pension which had been granted on that establishment for several years that the Irish deemed founded on the claim of merit. Indeed, they expressed themselves very fully on this subject on a subsequent occasion; for in a few

years afterwards, when there was an enquiry set on foot respecting the pension-list, the most zealous promoters of it declared with one voice that the pension granted to Sir Edward Hawke was clearly excluded from the object of their enquiry; agreeing that nothing gave them so much satisfaction as that it was in the power of their country to promote the domestic happiness of so distinguished a hero, to whom every part of the British Empire was under such infinite obligations. If we mistake not, when the Bill passed for laying a tax of four shillings in the pound upon pensions, that granted to Sir Edward Hawke was expressly excepted.*

It may also be mentioned that the city of Cork was the first to display its appreciation of Hawke's merits by presenting him, in March 1760, with the Freedom of the City in a gold box.

The whole conduct of this great admiral, in every step of the process which led to the victory of Quiberon, has now come before us. Let us compare with the facts which have been presented the verdict of that admirable historian, the late Lord Stanhope, who (surely from the absence of any Life of Hawke) had formed an idea of our hero wholly below the true standard. That, in printed notices of him previous to this date, the historian should have failed to detect the elements of independent greatness in the admiral would create no surprise,—for the general absence of such appreciation has been sufficiently accounted for in these pages. But for the purpose of glorifying Pitt, the historian has not been justified, even by the opinions of contemporary admirers of that wonderful man, in merging the admiral's share of the final victory in that of the Minister. We have seen how

* "Westminster Magazine," November, 1781.

resolved Pitt was that Hawke should have his chance of destroying Conflans, but we have not seen the slightest indication that Hawke himself doubted for a moment that it was not only possible, but his duty, to keep the sea, even through the storms of winter, and that he should soon be able to "make downright work of it." His whole correspondence, as far at it bears on this subject, is before the reader: nothing has been concealed.

But what are Lord Stanhope's words? Describing the dangers of the French coast, and giving credit to the admiral for braving them, he remarks:—

> Had Sir Edward Hawke desired to retire without striking a blow, he would not have wanted strong arguments to justify his conduct, and no doubt, had there still been a Prime Minister like Newcastle [he *was* Prime Minister in name] there would have been no lack of admirals like Byng. But it is the peculiar glory of Pitt—and a praise which all parties have concurred in awarding him—that he could impress his own energy on every branch of the public service; that under his direction our chiefs, both by land and sea, viewed obstacles as he did—only as a spur to exertion, and as an enhancement of fame.*

On this it is a duty to remark that, judging Hawke by the first battles he fought in the earlier war, there is not the smallest reason to suspect him of requiring the "impression" of any other person's "energy" upon him; judging by his conduct in the Seven Years' War, there is not the slightest evidence of any deterioration. He of all men least required any "spur to exertion," and least paid attention to any "enhancement of fame." It will not be open to

* "History of England," vol. iv. p. 169.

any future historian to indulge in these depreciatory expressions.

No such remarks, it may be observed, accompany the notices of Hawke in Hervey's contemporary "Naval History," now a rare book. In speaking of the victory of Quiberon won by "this intrepid son of Neptune, the impetuosity of whose courage equals anything recorded of the boldest of our naval heroes," he says he was

> perhaps the only commander that had been in the service of England since the days of Blake that would have engaged the French under the circumstances of situation and weather in which he then was.

And again—

> There was indeed something so bold and daring in his conduct that past times may be searched in vain to produce a like instance of heroism in a large fleet.*

And the contemporary historians not only tell us that this victory gave the finishing blow to the naval power of France during the remainder of the war, but describe its immediate effects—coming so soon after the Battle of Minden—on the whole position of France; how the public credit of the nation now collapsed, how the Court stopped payment of interest on twelve different branches of the National Debt, and how the ordinary necessities of Government were alone supplied by the contributions of plate and money procured from private individuals, very much after the manner of the old English "benevolence."

In describing the part taken by our hero in the

* Vol. v. pp. 191, 581.

glories of 1759 there must be no disparagement of his splendid band of colleagues, any more than of the great Minister without whose able combinations, spirit, and fortitude, these instruments could never have effected their great work of founding the Empire. It is a glorious galaxy, and the nation felt and appreciated its merits on the whole. Nothing shows the mind of the age more than its poems and ballads. This chapter shall conclude with a selection from them. The first, in imitation of an Ode of Horace, is from the "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1760 :—

What glorious deeds Boscawen grace !
And Hawke the ennobler of his race ;
Thy ships with boasted vengeance fraught,
Through tempests he undaunted sought :
See ! See ! those ships or fly or burn,
Or shrink, Vilaine, within thy urn.

The second was composed by Paul Whitehead, and sung by Mr. Beard, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, in the character of a recruiting sergeant, in December, 1759 :—

In story we're told how our monarchs of old
O'er France spread their royal domain,
But no annals can show their pride laid so low
As when brave George the Second did reign.

Of Roman and Greek let fame no more speak
How their arms the old world did subdue,
Through the nations around let our trumpets now sound,
How Britons have conquered the new.

East, West, North, and South, our cannons' loud mouth
Shall the right of our monarch maintain ;
On America's strand Amherst limits the land,
Boscawen gives law on the main.

Each port and each town we still make our own,
Cape Breton, Crown Point, Niagar,
Guadaloupe, Senegal, Quebec's mighty fall,
Shall prove we've no equal in war.

Though Conflans did boast he'd conquer our coast,
Our thunder soon made Monsieur mute ;
Brave Hawke winged his way, then pounced on his prey,
And gave him an English salute.

At Minden you know how we conquered the foe,
While homeward their army now steals,
"Though," they cried, "British bands are too hard for our hands
Begar, we can beat them in heels."

While our heroes from home for laurels now roam,
Should the flat-bottomed boats but appear,
Our militia shall show, no wooden-shoed foe
Can with freemen in battle compare.

Our fortunes and lives, our children and wives,
To defend is the time now or never ;
Then let each volunteer to the drum-head repair :
King George and old England for ever.

Of all the exploits which justified this and similar outbursts of national exultation, the victory of Quiberon was by far the greatest. The author of the "Life of Lord Keppel," who was assisted by the experienced hand of the present admiral of the fleet, Sir Henry Keppel, G.C.B., observes that "all other achievements were eclipsed by Hawke's splendid action, by which the French maritime power was completely destroyed. Never had this country a prouder pre-eminence than at the period when George the Third ascended the throne." *

* Vol. i. pp. 296, 297.

One more effusion of the period may conclude this chapter. It has perhaps less claim to poetical merit than even the foregoing ; but the circumstances of its composition must plead for its admission. It seems to have been circulated as a broadsheet of the day :—

THE GREAT FIFTY-NINE :

OR,

ADMIRAL HAWKE'S VICTORY OVER THE GRAND FRENCH FLEET COMMANDED BY MARSHAL CONFLANS OFF BELLEISLE, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1759.

Written on board the "Royal George" at sea [by the Rev. R. English, chaplain].

Ye stout British tars, ever firm in the wars,
Your deeds shall in history shine ;
For no annals can show a more glorious blow,
Than brave Hawke's in the Great Fifty-nine.

All rivals for fame at so noble a game,
Swift o'er the rough waves we advance ;
Fresh laurels in view, with ardour we flew
To strike the swelled topsails of France.

See Keppel and Speke, toil and glory they seek,
Resolved every danger to face ;
Whilst Denis and Howe fearless rush on the foe,
Hawke leading the spirited chase.

Now the culverins roar, re-echoed from shore,
Fate waits on the dubious fray ;
Our Rear, a bold train, every canvas they strain,
To share the renown of the day

Hostile rocks round us lay, yet we pressed on our prey,
In so mighty a cause at a venture ;
They trembled with awe, as soon as they saw
The famed "Royal George"* in their centre.

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* Hawke's flag-ship.

Conflans crowded sail, but it would not avail,
His ship she lies blazing on shore ;
The Marshal's undone, and the proud "Royal Sun"*
Is set not to rise any more.

Away they all scout, 'tis a general rout,
That ill with their vaunting agrees ;
Six capital† sail, sad victims they fall,
The rest fly dismayed o'er the seas.

Though the rude billows raged, yet so close we engaged
That rarely a shot was misplaced ;
The troops on the land, chill'd with horror they stand,
To see the White Flag so disgraced.

No longer they'll boast of descents on our coast,
The bright Queen of the Main to reduce ;
The fair English Rose, more lovely it blows,
While droops the faint Flower de Luce.

Each generous heart played so gallant a part,
That glory has crowned our endeavours ;
And what is still more, the lasses on shore
Will esteem us deserving their favours.

The chief honour, however, was paid to the triumphs of the war in the celebrated "Hearts of Oak," by Garrick, with its spirit-stirring melody by Boyce. It has been perhaps the favourite song of seamen ever since. It is much more than that, for it is almost as truly a national song as "Rule Britannia."

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* Conflans' flag-ship.

† "Capital" was the word used at this period to denote line-of-battle ships as distinguished from smaller vessels.

CHAPTER X.

LAST SERVICES.

1760—1771.

THE remaining services of our admiral during the war are void of any special interest. The consequences of his own victory left him no more to do than Nelson would have found had he survived Trafalgar. The runaway ships in the Vilaine had to be blocked up, as they could not be destroyed; and this work was assigned to Boscawen, while Hawke was allowed to remain at home for several months to recruit his health. Two or three characteristic touches alone require to be extracted from the correspondence of this period.

The "Ramilies," Hawke's old flagship, was lost in February, and we find him applying to the Admiralty for aid to

> four poor unhappy women, widows of warrant officers of the late "Ramilies." They are left destitute of everything, and both they and their children must infallibly starve unless the Board will commiserate their unfortunate situation.

A difficulty arises as to a Spanish ship which tried to break the blockade, and which, like the Dutch and Swedes, Hawke had ordered to be searched and sent off the coast. This, in the delicate relations existing

at the moment with Spain, was a very different matter from the Dutch or Swedish difficulty, and the Admiralty were shabby enough, now the danger had passed away, to try and saddle their admiral with the responsibility. He writes on May 31st:—

> As soon as I can get a little better health I intend going to town, when I flatter myself that I shall convince Lord Anson that I did no more in this affair than what became an officer in my situation.

Once more he hoists his flag on board the "Royal George." This was in August, 1760. Soon afterwards he returns to the hard case of the Masters and their claim for pilotage. He pleads "the great fatigue and pains which the masters who conducted squadrons on that dangerous station" had undergone. No attention had been paid to his former application, nor was the provisioning of the fleet, after all that had taken place, any better than ever before.

On September 4th he once more arrives at Quiberon. The Government had now determined, not only to establish a permanent blockading force in those roads, but to obtain possession of Belleisle itself. Pitt was bent on this acquisition. His real motives were to obtain a sort of perpetual trophy of the victory of Quiberon, a convenient support for blockading fleets, and a set-off against Minorca whenever the Peace should be debated; but he treated it in the Council as a new method of making a diversion in favour of Frederick. Walpole asserts that both Boscawen and Hawke had, this very year, successively reported against the practicability of taking the island; but that seems unlikely, as Keppel, whom Pitt destined for

the attack, was ordered to fit out a squadron for the purpose, and to place himself under Hawke's orders; and the following letter to Hawke from Anson, which contains the first intimation of Pitt's design, treats the admiral with the most entire confidence in his approval; it is undated, but cannot be later than October, 1760:—

SIR,

The situation of the King's affairs in Germany requiring a diversion to be made on the enemy's coasts, His Majesty's servants have considered which may be the properest place for that purpose, and examined Mr. Keppel who, having been lately in the Bay, had an opportunity of making the observations which I send herewith on part of the coast of the Isle of Belleisle, which 'tis thought may be attacked with the best prospects of success; and the King as well as his servants reposing great confidence in you, I have it in command to let you know that a very considerable body of troops, with a train of artillery, are collecting together, and transports ready to embark them whenever it shall be thought proper. Wherefore you are desired to use every means in your power to inform yourself how near ships can lay to batter the several works in the sandy bays of Belleisle mentioned by Mr. Keppel, and what depth of water there is close to the shore, and to ascertain the distance of the citadel from the said sandy bays. You will also inform yourself whether troops can be landed at Lomanie or any other part of the island besides those described in Mr. Keppel's paper, and how far they may be from the Citadel. . . . . I hope it is needless for me to repeat the confidence that is reposed in you on this occasion, and the necessity there is for the strictest secrecy.*

It has been generally stated that the death of the old King, which took place on October 27th, put a sudden stop to these preparations; but it was in

* Anson Correspondence.

reality the lateness of the season. Among the Hawke Papers are the Secret Instructions transmitted to the admiral by Pitt, and signed by the young King on November 17th, three weeks after he had ascended the throne. These Instructions require Hawke to afford every assistance to Keppel and General Kingsley in their attack on, and occupation of, Belleisle, to protect the expedition from annoyance by the enemy in any quarter, and to keep up a cordial understanding with the general. There was a difference here as to the relations between Keppel and his chief, which distinguishes the position from that which had, in 1758, given such offence to Hawke in the case of Howe; though perhaps a distinction not so clear as he might have desired. These Instructions, however, came to nothing. The expedition was on the point of sailing, but was counter-ordered at the last moment, and broken up in December; nor was it resumed till March of the following year, when Hawke had left the station. There was no longer by that time any French force in the Vilaine, and nothing, therefore, to interfere with the brilliant success attained under the excellent joint combinations of Keppel and General Hodgson, creditable to both alike.

One concluding word is required as to this King, whose death carried with it great issues. Enough has been said above in relation to George the Second, and the personal influence he exercised in elevating his country out of the depressed state into which it had fallen in the first half of the century. So studiously has he been disparaged in modern times, chiefly in consequence of the publication of Lord Hervey's and

Horace Walpole's Memoirs, that it is difficult to believe, when we turn to the pages of contemporary writers, that they are speaking of the same man with ourselves. Among the former there is one general echo of the praises of

"this great prince," and how "he lived to see the British name, under his auspices, advanced to the highest pitch of dignity and grandeur." He had "added to the Crown of Great Britain the riches of the American fisheries, the hostile territories taken from the French in North America, the sugar-islands of Guadaloupe and its dependencies, the gum trade of Africa, and the greatest and most improvable commerce in the Asiatic regions.' "His conquests eclipsed those of our Henrys and Edwards."*

Even those who most praised the administration of Pitt, never allowed the merits of the King to be forgotten; nor should they be forgotten.

To the subject of our memoir his death must have been the loss of a personal friend, or at least patron. Hawke had probably been pulled through more difficulties than he knew by the sense that was generally entertained of the old King's good feeling towards the man he is said to have called "my captain." In the correspondence subsequent to the date of the King's death there is certainly an indication of a change in Hawke's relation with the Admiralty. His wishes about the relief of his ships, and the keeping up of their proper force, are no longer attended to. He detects a gross imposition in the sale of a French frigate to the Spaniards, but the Admiralty, no doubt for political reasons, do not support him. He is again

* Entick's "History of the War," vol. v. p. 80.

thirty weeks out, and "his health is much impaired."* At last, on March 11th, 1761, he strikes his flag once more, and goes into the country "for the recovery of his health." The object of keeping so large a fleet in Quiberon Bay had passed away; for the few remaining ships which had taken refuge in the Vilaine in 1759, and not been broken up, escaped, by the advantage of a dark night and the blunder of the guard-ships which should have detected them, to Brest in January, 1761. The capture of the island of Dumet by Lord Howe, under Hawke's orders, is the only incident of this long and weary service noticed in the despatches or contemporary books; and that was only of importance because it supplied the blockading fleet with water, and rendered it so far independent.

An absurd remark of Campbell's† on the "inactivity" of Hawke's squadron in 1761, has been sufficiently met by Charnock,‡ and scarcely requires notice in this place. He had no instructions to make descents on the French coast, a policy which, though the French were forced to keep troops ready in case of such descents, Pitt had now relinquished; and the attack on Belleisle was, as we have seen, being a commodore's command, placed in other hands. He

* "What milksops the Marlboroughs and Turennes, the Blakes and the Van Tromps, appear now, who whipped into winter-quarters and into port the moment their noses looked blue. Sir Cloudesley Shovel said that an admiral would deserve to be broke who kept great ships out after the end of September, and to be shot if after October. There is Hawke in the Bay weathering this winter, after conquering in a storm." —Walpole's "Letters" (Cunningham), Jan. 14th, 1760.

† "Lives of the Admirals," vol. iv. p. 180.

‡ Vol. iv. p. 289.

performed the service on which he was sent. The "public" may or may not, as Campbell states, have felt "general surprise and indignation" at the return of the squadron; but his remark is unsupported, and it seems most improbable, since Hawke's orders were perfectly well-known; nor was Keppel's appointment to attack Belleisle ever taken as a slur upon the admiral. His rank entitled him to command against fleets, and there were none left to fight. We have seen that Hawke had enemies; they probably found access to Dr. Campbell. Perhaps the best answer to such remarks is that within a few weeks of the return which caused "surprise and indignation," Hawke was unanimously elected and sworn an Elder Brother of the Trinity House, and next month received the Freedom of the City of Dublin in a gold box.

It remains to be said that the year 1760 afforded a remarkable contrast to 1759, and that this was the natural effect of the completeness of the conquests of the last-named year. Rodney, keeping watch over Havre, was successful in destroying the remainder of the flat-bottomed boats which had threatened the English coast; the conquest of Canada was assured by the capture of Montreal; and a few single actions of ships, like those which marked the expiring efforts of the French after 1805, served to display the spirit which had been so brilliantly exhibited in the battles of the previous years. France was completely exhausted; and in England the question of peace was uppermost from the moment of the young King's accession. From that moment the speculation, characterised by the phraseology which the new develop-

ment of coal fuel suggested,—whether the machinery of government was to be supplied with Scotch coal, Newcastle coal, or pit-coal—whether the country was to be governed by Bute, Newcastle, or Pitt, was the leading feature of English politics, and it carried with it the question of peace or war. Neither France nor England were, however, perfectly serious in the diplomatic conferences which began to be held. The English were still under the magic influence of Pitt, and by no means felt their empire secure. The French had one last card to play, and in 1761 they succeeded in playing it.

The war was in fact to end as it had begun in 1739. The Spaniards were once more to be principals. Spain, nearly at the end of her resources in 1748, had been glad to make peace at that date; and, though entirely sympathising with the French when the war broke out afresh, was restrained from trying her fortunes once more by the prudence of Wall, the Prime Minister, supported by the Queen who ruled Spain during the closing years of the imbecile Ferdinand the Sixth. She was now betrayed by the new sovereign into a further step towards ruin. This was the late King's half-brother, Charles the Third of Naples, who became at the death of Ferdinand, in 1759, Charles the Third of Spain. His weakness in suffering his new kingdom to be made the catspaw of France—partly the result of gratitude for French assistance in re-arranging the Bourbon thrones in Italy, but still more of the festering grudge entertained ever since the summary proceedings of Mathews and Martin at Naples in 1742—proves how even a good

and respectable King may be a *damnosa hereditas* to his subjects. His policy, however, fell in only too well with the passions of those subjects, and with the alarm they felt at the enormous progress which England had lately made, at the expense of France, in North America and the West Indies.

As to the character of Charles the Third of Spain, so much eulogised by Lord Stanhope,* there is much to be said on the other side, even in reference to his domestic government. It is an immortal honour to have abolished torture, checked the Inquisition, and encouraged national enterprise; but a man whose overwhelming interests were centered in field-sports could not be expected to take a large view of affairs.† He was no sooner seated on his throne than the full battery of Bourbon family influence was turned upon him, and the new family compact of 1761 was, after incessant efforts, the result.

The work of Cardinal Fleury was now completed. The brilliant prospects opened up by the acquisition of Lorraine, the settlement of the Bourbons on the

* "History of England," vol. iv. p. 184.

† In a trustworthy report of a conversation with Mr. Harris, afterwards the celebrated Lord Malmesbury, in 1777, that wise ambassador, who had recently left Madrid, described the Spanish King as follows:—

"He has no extraordinary reach of capacity, is no plotter against other people's peace or his own, but is decent in every department, with sense enough to fill all his public functions with a sense of dignity, yet entirely given up to field-sports, the ladies, and praying. In conversation he is affable, and even agreeable, but above all things, decent; nay, I may say that on every occasion he conducts himself with the strictest propriety. He is remarkably fond of shooting, and will on no occasion sacrifice that amusement to business." —MS. *penes auctorem.*

Italian thrones, and the family compact of 1733, which was to insure the salvation of Spain and her co-operation with France for ever,—so that, as Louis Quatorze once said, there should no longer be any Pyrenees,—all these were now crowned by a fresh and far more important compact. But for Spain this was an anachronism ; and the new King, who showed so many good qualities, would have served his country better had he possessed all the bad qualities in the world, and refused to listen to the Marquis de Choiseul. The two wars, culminating in 1759, had placed all parties in a totally different position from that which they had previously held. The colonial empire of France, which had been the grand object of the French in formerly coming to the assistance of Spain, had totally collapsed ; the growth of the colonial empire of England had been secured for the future on its true basis, the supremacy of the English at sea, chiefly by Hawke's means ; and the warriors formed under Pitt's administration were perfectly capable of adding to the British conquests the whole of what was left to Spain. That she saved any portion of the wreck was due to the intestine struggles which accompanied the accession of George the Third, and the remarkable forbearance which signalised the British negotiations for peace.

All through the year 1761 the armaments of Spain had excited the remonstrances of Pitt, and being perfectly assured that her fresh alliance with France was virtually formed, he insisted on a Declaration of War which might forestall her hostile action. The Bute interest prevailed against him ; and in October he

resigned. It soon transpired that the Spanish Court, as Pitt well knew, had only been waiting for the arrival of the galleons, and that the compact, which it was vainly attempted to keep secret, had then been instantly signed. By the end of the year the breach between Spain and Great Britain was publicly declared; the Declaration of War had to be made in January, 1762; and the designs of Spain upon Portugal, assistance in which had been the immediate bribe held out by France, were disclosed by a perfectly unjustifiable Declaration of War against that peaceable power by the two Courts. The British forces were now to be ranged in defence of their faithful ally, and Hawke was called for the last time from his retirement.

Hoisting his flag at Spithead on April 27th, 1762, our admiral's position seems to be very much like what it had been at the opening of the war in 1755. He is the visible representative of the Admiralty, arranging for the distribution of the home fleet, suggesting plans for blockading Dunkirk and Brest, providing convoys, expediting transports, and pressing seamen. The bustle all around him was not indeed so intense or so wild as at the former period, for there was no longer any confusion or alarm; but great armaments had been already despatched, and others were proceeding.

The resignation of Pitt had certainly not affected the vigour with which the new expeditions were planned or commanded; but then, as his friends maintained, they had all been originally planned by him, and the spirit which he had infused was that which animated the officers; the success of

Rodney and Monckton in the West Indies was indeed directly due to his own administration. The capture of Havana by Lord Albemarle, Sir George Pocock, and Keppel, though obtained at a great cost of life, was one of the finest achievements of the war, and, with the success of Draper and Cornish at Manilla, brought Spain on her knees. In the course of a few months her colonies had been shattered to pieces, nor had France, by her last efforts, gained anything but a partner in misfortune.

Hawke's personal share in the glories of this year was but small, though through the capture of some rich Spanish ships by his cruisers he seems at last to have acquired wealth. He is stated in some accounts to have made a short cruise in May to look out for M. de Ternay, who had escaped out of Brest with a small squadron ;* but this is a mistake. He did not leave Spithead till June 25th, when, with the Duke of York as his rear-admiral, in the "Princess Amelia" (Lord Howe serving as the Duke's flag-captain and dry nurse), he, in the "Royal George," proceeded at the head of a squadron of ten line-of-battle ships to cruise off the north-west coast of Spain. The object of this cruise was to protect Portugal from the ten Spanish line-of-battle ships lying in Ferrol ; the land forces sent by England under Lord Loudoun, Colonel Burgoyne, the Count de la Lippe, and others, protected her from invasion by land. There is no truth in the statement that the admiral was sent to Lisbon to the help of the Portuguese. Whatever the moral

* Charnock's "*Biog. Nav.*," vol. iv. p. 290.

effect of his name might be, it was produced from his station between Capes Ortegal and Finisterre. The Spanish ships did not venture to come out; Lisbon was safe by sea; and the Portuguese troops, by the help of the English, were more than a match for the feeble levies of Spain.

Not the slightest incident deserving notice occurs in this cruise. The official letters of the youthful rear-admiral are carefully preserved amongst the Hawke Papers; but the only one which shows any character is the first:—

SIR EDWARD, Tuesday Evening.

I have this moment obtained the King's permission to hoist my flag under your command. I need not tell you how happy I am, nor how ready I shall be punctually to obey every order I receive. I am just setting out for Kew, and remain, your affectionate friend,

EDWARD.*

The services of an officer of such rank as Hawke on a station where nothing was likely to occur, were not required for any length of time. On August 24th his squadron puts into Torbay to refit, and the admiral requests Lord Bute to let him haul down his flag. The notice of his return, in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of that date, is not a bad specimen of the small amount of information current on foreign affairs even amongst cultivated society:—"The sudden return of this fleet without attempting anything occasions much speculation. It was fitted out at an immense expense, and great expectations were raised

* Prince Edward, of whom something might have been made, had he lived, uniformly treated Hawke with proper respect.

from the known courage of the commander; its return therefore seems the more extraordinary." There was nothing to "attempt"! To attack Ferrol had never been dreamt of. To blockade an inferior force of Spanish ships could be done by anyone; and the peace was already as good as made.

The last letter of Hawke's official correspondence afloat is on the 26th, when he grants the Duke of York leave of absence for a few days. Sir Charles Hardy, an excellent officer and friend of Hawke's, takes the squadron, when refitted, under his command, and (the duke still serving as rear-admiral) continues the blockade. To this the negotiations for peace, which Lord Bute was now pressing with all his might, soon put an end. On September 3rd Hawke came on shore; and his service at sea was closed.

It was probably during this last command, with his flag in the "Royal George," that the following incident occurred:—"Owing to a collection of soot in the funnel of the stove, the ship took fire in the great cabin. Sir Edward was at that time occupied in dressing himself; and when this circumstance, which to men less firm would have been of the most alarming nature, was discovered by him, he went out on deck, and, taking the first lieutenant aside, calmly said to him, in a low tone of voice, 'The ship is on fire in my cabin; give the necessary directions to the people to put it out.'" * The "Royal George" was not built to be burnt. This is the ship which, after bearing Hawke's flag triumphant, sank in a moment

* Charnock's "*Biog. Nav.*," vol. iv. p. 292

at Spithead, when "Kempenfelt went down, with twice four hundred men." Has it ever been noticed how appropriate are the poet's words—"His fingers held the pen"? Kempenfelt was famous as a man of superior abilities and a taste for literature. He and Lord Howe share the honour of making the great improvement in naval signals which marked the close of the century.

Shortly before Sir Edward's last cruise the career of his old chief and friend, Lord Anson, had also terminated. He died suddenly on June 6th, 1762, at the age of 65. Notices of his services and character have formed a considerable portion of this book, and they will therefore require no further attention. It has not been found possible, under all the lights which the life of Hawke throws upon the period, to endorse the whole of the judgment which Sir John Barrow, in his "Life," passed upon his hero; but by far the greater part remains. Few have served their country more honestly and efficiently. No department of the state required more reform than the Royal Navy at the time when he entered the Admiralty, and no one could have done more than he did, during the sixteen years of his administration, towards its regeneration. The reader has observed that there was yet much wanting in that administration to render it perfect; but allowance must be made for the times. Many years were to pass before the grossest abuses in the civil Government of the realm were swept away; but the navy, under Anson, may be said to have led the way. At any rate merit was very generally rewarded, and honest, straightforward

principles of regulating the service very generally adopted. The *matériel* of British fleets was at length raised to something like the level of that of their enemies, and the *personnel* was, at least in some degree, elevated beyond the low standard of preceding times. It was a grand thing for the navy to have an honest man and a gentleman permanently fixed at the head of the profession through so many changes of Government; and we have seen that it was but in one instance, the case of the unhappy Byng, that any exception to this eulogy can be found.

Boscawen had also died before the war came to an end, and at an earlier age. He had not completed his fiftieth year, when he was carried off in January, 1761. Of him also we have observed sufficient marks both of character and services to enable us to appreciate his great merits. Virtuous like Anson and Hawke, as brave and eager for employment and distinction as Nelson himself, and with every advantage of rank, he only wanted opportunity to have done the greatest deeds. Like Hawke and Anson he was most appreciated where he was best known; unlike his friends, he left behind him a wife whose great superiority of character reflected back a lustre on her husband to which the improved society of that period amply testifies. Among the revivers of literary taste and social religion, who were known by the nickname of "bas-bleus," hardly anyone held a higher place than Mrs. Boscawen, or carried her lofty rank better than the admiral's daughter, the Duchess of Beaufort.

Of the merits of the Peace of Paris, the solid termination of the two wars which have been passed

in review, this is not the place to speak. The balance of the numerous and heated arguments for and against, seems to incline towards a favourable view of it. Walpole's jocular remark upon its Continental aspect was not far off the mark. "It includes Spain, saves Portugal, and leaves the hero and heroine of Germany to scratch out one another's last eye."* Its merits in the latter respect were as great as those of the Peace of Utrecht. Frederick and Maria Theresa found themselves, when left alone to fight it out, obliged to come to terms, much as the Emperor and the King of France had formerly discovered a similar necessity under similar circumstances; but this is not to say that the alliances and the wars into which Great Britain had entered, had not been, till the objects of her own self-defence were obtained, both politic and necessary.†

It is more easy to find an author whose summing up of the history of these wars will be considered judicial, at least by Englishmen:—

"Once more," says Ranke, "in this world-embracing conflict between the two kingdoms, the internal superiority of the English was proved. In spite of an enormous debt the credit of England held good, and it was not necessary to lay on very excessive taxes; while the French Government had to resort to advances from those who rented State lands, and was obliged to increase by fresh imposts taxes which were already oppressive, so that it exhausted all its resources.

"We may regard this war as a continuation and completion of those great contests which came in with the revolution of

* "Letters to Mann," vol. iv. p. 120.

† For one of the best criticisms of the Peace of Paris see the "Annual Register for 1763," written by Burke.

1688. They were all directed against the predominance of France, and were at once Continental and maritime. . . . Less than ever was said about religious grounds. As a matter of historical fact, however, the religious motive was more conspicuous than before. The Protestant Powers were on one side, those of the [Roman] Catholic and Greek faith on the other.

"What a glorious empire was it to the head of which George the Third came!—the product of one history, all of one piece, from the moment of the first Teutonic Settlement in Britain until the founding of its maritime dominion in both hemispheres. Through long centuries the logical and active mind of the people which rejected all that was foreign, and accepted only that which was akin to it, had worked at the great edifice which now was the strongest representative of the west among distant nations. The living elements of culture which the Empire included in itself worked in free movements, often opposed to each other, but for that very reason all the more strong and many-sided. Individual and corporate independence did not in the least disturb a united development of power."*

Contrast with this solemn, far-sounding strain the thought which Walpole communicated to his friend Mann, on the news of the triumphs of 1762 :—

Well! I wish we had conquered the world, and had done. I think we were full as happy when we were a peaceable, quiet, set of tradesfolks, as now that we are heirs-apparent to the Romans, and overrunning the East and West Indies.

But Walpole was the son of the man who was satisfied that the "tradesfolk" should be insulted and degraded; and how long their trade would have survived such a treatment it required no prophet to foretell. It is true that the very colonies for which the mother country had been most concerned were

* Ranke's "History of England," vol. iv. p. 420.

the first to throw off a connection no longer vital, and that political faction vied with administrative imbecility in breaking up into fragments the empire which has just been formed; but even so the grand inheritance was not dissipated, nor can its eventual issues be yet foreseen.

Of all the naval officers whose prime vocation ceased with the peace of 1763, and whose high qualities, under the training they had undergone, would in a very few more years, had the peace not intervened, realised to the letter Horace Walpole's hyperbole, there were now three, and three only, at the head of their profession; and there were three more, of a younger generation, perfectly fitted to take their places in another war. The first three were Hawke, Pocock, and Saunders; the second, Rodney, Keppel, and Howe. Hawke was considerably the senior, and it was under him that the three younger men had been mostly trained. Of these, the second had his opportunity in 1778, and lost it; the first and third were to hand down the lessons of the two imperial wars to the Nelsons and Collingwoods of the next generation.

But though Hawke was a man of whom even Walpole could say that "he had as much merit in his profession and to his country as man could have,"* and though he had been Anson's right-hand man for so many years, he was not asked to take Anson's place. The administration of the experienced admiral had turned the office of First Lord of the Admiralty

* "Mem. of Geo. III.," vol. ii. p. 398.

into that of a director of routine, as long as peace might last; and there was no possibility of war for many years. Thus the place became one which anybody might be thought able to fill; and several civilians did fill it, during the ignoble and factious struggles which harassed the young King, for longer or shorter periods. Not one of them, George Grenville, Halifax, or Egmont, showed any particular aptitude for the office, as Lord Sandwich (who himself held the post for a short time at this early period) did afterwards, and other civilians in later times. In the Rockingham administration of 1765, Saunders and Keppel filled the posts of Junior Lords of the Admiralty. The two admirals having been deeply attached to one another in their professional service, the elder came to be entirely dependent on the younger, and the Board was really in their hands. When Pitt came back to power in 1766, as Lord Chatham—full of the memory of Anson—he determined to have a naval First Lord. He did not, according to Walpole—and it is probable enough—wish to pass over Hawke or Pocock in favour of Saunders, their junior; but he did so for the following reasons. He discovered that Saunders, having already held an important position at the Board would retire if any other naval officer were placed over his head, and that his retirement would carry Keppel with it. The Board would be thus broken up; and besides he had taken a liking for Saunders ever since his ability had been displayed in the joint capture of Quebec along with Wolfe. That officer therefore became First Lord, but only for a couple of months; when he suddenly, along with Keppel, resigned his

place, which, it is evident, he could not have much valued. Hawke was now instantly offered the post, which he accepted, and held for the succeeding five years.

Walpole's account of this strange freak of Saunders is confirmed by an independent authority :—

"Saunders," says he, "a most gallant but weak man—[all naval officers are "weak" with this writer],—governed by Admiral Keppel and Lord Albemarle, had been persuaded by them to throw up his post of First Lord of the Admiralty, and join his old friends the Rockinghams."*

And in the "Selwyn Correspondence,"† "Gilly Williams" tells Selwyn :—

Your friend, yellow Saunders, gave up yesterday. He gave for the only reason that at his time of life he could not think of living without the Keppels. [Keppel himself, it seems, resigned in order to mark his disapproval of Lord Chatham's dismissal of his friend Lord Edgecumbe from the post of Treasurer of the Household.]

Here ends the career of one of Anson's favourite pupils, of whose gallant conduct and generous spirit we have already heard. Sir Charles Saunders had no opportunity of commanding fleets in general actions ; but the country thoroughly trusted him, and, as we have seen, Pitt never forgot him. An incident connected with this appointment over the heads of Hawke and Pocock deserves notice, and may be inserted in the words of Charnock, who vouches for the truth of the anecdote :—

* "Mem. of Geo. III.," vol. ii. p. 398.
† Vol. ii. p. 91.

When Sir George Pocock was first made acquainted with the appointment of Sir Charles Saunders to the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, he immediately went to the late Lord Hawke, and complained to him in rather warm terms, of the indignity he thought offered on that occasion to the older flag-officers who had equally distinguished themselves. Sir Edward Hawke was at that very time on the point of going out in order to wish Sir Charles joy of his promotion ; and when he informed Sir George of his intention, the opinion of that great and good man had such weight with him as not only to moderate his displeasure, but even to induce him to adopt a similiar course himself. His disgust, however, though temporarily assuaged, was not effaced ; and his former sentiments as to the public indignity offered to his contemporaries, and what he deemed private neglect to himself, induced him to persevere in his first resolution to retire from the service for ever.*

Here then, at the same moment with that of Saunders, the career of this fine officer came also to an end. His chief exploits had been performed in India, where he had displayed the greatest courage, but being matched against the ablest admiral the French possessed, and not always well supported, he was never able, though he fought no less than three pitched battles with him, to obtain any decisive success. Neither squadron ever took a ship from the other ; but D'Aché was always driven off, and though the force of the English was decidedly inferior, suffered the greatest loss. It was this want of capacity for turning circumstances to account, so as to produce a decisive battle, which prevented Pocock from ranking with the great masters of naval warfare ; but these Indian actions, taken along with his admirable behaviour at

* "*Biog. Nav.*," vol. iv. p. 405.

the capture of Havana, place him high in the second rank. Further, he seems to have been a man more than ordinarily fitted to inspire affection, and to influence his associates by examples of the highest kind. Amongst his other virtues, public and private, he is said "never to have been known to swear even on board his ship,"*—the abstinence on board ship being apparently an almost inconceivable mark of self-restraint, worthy of the angels to whom Hawke, in his emotion, compared his two victorious captains at Quiberon.

Lord Chatham's letter on Hawke's appointment has been preserved among the family papers, and may serve as a specimen of that great man's official style :—

BOND STREET,

SIR, Friday, Nov. 28th, 1766.

I am commanded by the King to acquaint you that Sir Charles Saunders and Mr. Keppel having come to a resolution to resign their seats at the Admiralty, His Majesty has been graciously pleased to turn his thoughts to you, sir, for the head of that Board. I have the honour, in consequence, to propose to you in His Majesty's name that very important office.

Give me leave to assure you, sir, that I have a particular satisfaction in executing the King's commands to me upon this interesting occasion, and allow me to add my sincere hopes that this letter may find you in as full possession of health as your country wishes you to be.

I have the honour to be, with most respectful esteem and consideration, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

CHATHAM.

On December 2nd Chatham desires Hawke to be at the Levee next day to kiss hands.

* Charnock's "*Biog. Nav.*," vol. iv. p. 467.

Not much remains to us by which Hawke's tenure of this office may be illustrated. It was a period when statesmanship of every sort was at a low ebb. Chatham soon passed under a mental eclipse ; Grafton was calling down on himself the not undeserved satires of "Junius"; Wilkes was making government impossible ; not a single man of first-rate ability came to the front ; and the young King was striving in vain to break through the fetters of a pampered oligarchy, which believed in nothing but itself as the representative of the Revolution families. Some stray hints, however, touching the administration of the navy at this time, have survived.

One cardinal point at least of Hawke's peace-administration deserves special mention. His practice gave rise to an authoritative maxim, always quoted in after times with the highest respect, just as in war he established for the first time the principle that the enemy must never be suffered to escape, but, in spite of all instructions for keeping the line, must be engaged within pistol shot. Shortly after his death it was remarked in a pamphlet, styled "A Seaman's Remarks on the British Ships of the Line," and bearing all the signs of the highest authority, that the late Lord Hawke had laid it down, and during his whole administration acted on the maxim, in which Lord Sandwich had followed him—"that our enemies being peculiarly attentive to their marine, our fleet could only be termed considerable in the proportion it bore to that of the House of Bourbon." In other words, the British fleet must always be kept in such a state that it would be a match for France

and Spain combined, the only nations which could in that day be thought of as hostile maritime powers. It would have saved England many millions if this maxim had not been constantly set aside when wars were over, and when the supposed exigencies of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were brought to bear upon First Lords of the Admiralty. The writer goes on to prove his point. While Lord Hawke, he tells us, broke up fourteen line-of-battle ships, he built thirteen, and left fifteen on the stocks.* Thus he kept his country on a fair level with her rivals. The French had by no means given up the struggle, because they had been beaten. They had been steadily repairing their losses, and improving their resources, so that they had been known to have entirely built and completed a three-decker of 110 guns at Brest in fourteen months, and a seventy-four-gun ship was built, launched, rigged, and stored, at the same port in ninety-five days.

Lord Sandwich, Hawke's successor, acknowledged his maxim; but was unable to comply with it to the extent which he desired. It was thus that Rodney, Howe, and Nelson found so much work cut out for them.

It is not till towards the close of Hawke's term of office that we hear of any attack upon his administration. Up to that time he was steadily working on the principle above-mentioned, and, venerated by the whole service, was taking judicious care of the great interests committed to his charge.

It was under his auspices that in 1767 his old

* See also "Life of Lord Keppel," vol. ii. p. 330.

captain, Augustus Hervey, succeeded in passing through the House a measure, which had been too long delayed, for improving the half-pay of naval lieutenants by the addition of a shilling a day to the miserable pittance of two shillings which they had hitherto received. His picture of their condition is distressing enough. The lieutenants on half-pay—and they were numerous after such a war—"are now starving for want of subsistence, hiding themselves in the most remote corners of the country, some for fear of gaols, which their necessities and their misfortunes, not their faults, have reduced them to be afraid of; others to hide their wants from the world, being ashamed to appear where they cannot support that character which their long services, great merits, and delicate sense of honour entitled them to. These, sir, in a few years must be all lost to the country. Already but too many of them have been obliged to seek, with their families, a settlement in America. Many are reduced to go as second mates in merchant ships; others have fixed themselves in trades." "He had the satisfaction of knowing that his measure had the good wishes of that great and brave admiral whom His Majesty has placed at the head of the naval service."* Hervey carried his point; it certainly was not much to ask.

The position held by the chief admirals of the day at this period may be here reviewed in a few words, since it is in connection with them that we find what distinctive notices of the First Lord occur. Keppel

* Parliamentary Debates.

had a seat at the Board during the portion of the time his old chief was First Lord, and was regarded by Hawke and the service generally as the leading officer of the day, if active service should be required. Thus when the preparations for war with Spain, in 1770, were made, he was at once designated for the chief command.

Rodney, Keppel's senior, was at the head of Greenwich Hospital, and at this period ruined himself by election expenses on the Tory side of politics. About the time when Hawke went out of office he became commander-in-chief on the Jamaica station, and on resigning his command, not being able to live in England, determined to economise in Paris; nor could he have returned to immortalise his name, and draw his country out of the abyss into which it had fallen in 1779, if it had not been for the generosity of a truly noble Frenchman, Marshal Biron, who had learnt to value his character.

Howe, who had held a seat at the Admiralty for a short time under Sandwich and Egmont, had become Treasurer of the Navy; and when the expected war with Spain brought Keppel to the front, was nominated for the Mediterranean command.

"Sir Edward Hawke," says Barrow,* "incurred the censure of many for nominating so young an admiral to the command of so important a squadron; and he had an intimation of a motion intended to be made in the House for an address to His Majesty to inform the House who had advised His Majesty to nominate Lord Howe, one of the junior rear-admirals, to such a command. The motion does not appear to have been

* "Life of Howe," p. 79.

brought forward, but Sir Edward Hawke declared he was perfectly ready to meet it ; that he held himself responsible, as First Lord of the Admiralty, for the appointment recommended to His Majesty, and equally ready to declare that he did advise the King to sanction the one in question. 'I have tried my Lord Howe,' said Sir Edward, 'on most important occasions ; he never asked me how he was to execute any service entrusted to his charge, but always went straightforward and performed it.'"

The reader has had opportunities of observing the truth of this generous testimony ; but as we now part with his lordship, it is time to sum up his career.

Much of Lord Howe's time seems to have been spent during this Peace in reading, and improving the education which he was taken from Eton too early to carry far. He recommenced his honourable career in 1776, when he took the American command, since which time his services have become a leading part of our later naval history. Even more than Keppel, he was Hawke's constant pupil, though not perhaps so intimate a friend ; and in his noble character we see a true reflection of that of his master. In disregarding Howe's supposed disqualification for command on the ground of youth and rank, Hawke was strictly following Lord Anson's conduct in regard to himself. He began his own career as admiral at forty-two ; Howe was nominated at forty-five. As it happened, his best services had already been performed while under Hawke. When his time for great commands came, the long Peace seems to have rusted his original capacity. His career in America was not a distinguished one ; it was thought by the best judges

that he ought—though no doubt he suffered under great difficulties—to have done more with his fleet at the relief of Gibraltar in 1782; and, in his famous battle of the First of June, 1794, there is no doubt whatever that his great age alone prevented him from following up a victory which would, if he had been a younger man, have put nearly the whole of the enemy's fleet into his hands. His final services to this country in the mutinies of 1797 were considerable; but they also partook of the defects produced by age. Concessions of some sort were necessary; but Howe carried them so far that, had it not been for more vigorous officers, the country must have been ruined. If Howe is to be classed amongst the first rank of naval officers, it is not amongst the foremost occupants of that position that he should find his place.

In 1769 we find Hawke giving sensible advice to the Prime Minister on a point which, if the country had not been in a misgoverned condition, ought to have caused no difficulty at all. He was called upon in the House by Colonel Barré to give an account of the alleged concessions made to the French in a case where a French frigate, anchoring in the Downs, and refusing to salute the British flag, had been forced by a lieutenant in command of an English frigate to lower her flag; and the French ambassador had demanded reparation. Every expedient failed to pacify the French; but at last they were silenced, by the advice of Hawke, on the ground that the lieutenant had sailed for India, and could not be examined as to the truth of the matter till he returned, in about

three years' time. This, which was a delicate affair under the circumstances, must have been well handled, since Hawke was able to tell Barré publicly that the French Ministry, "though they have complained, seem by no means disposed to carry things to extremities in support of their demand of redress, as they find no disposition in our Court to relax in the claim to that ceremonial of submission, the exacting of which was the occasion of the dispute."

It is from a speech of Hawke's in the course of this debate that we discover the fact that he made a visit to France in the summer of 1769, and was convinced by the observations he was able to make on that occasion "that the French were not in a condition to go to war." This conviction, which was perfectly just, served to tranquillise his own mind and that of his Government in view of the danger to be apprehended from the conduct of Spain in relation to the Falkland Islands. But it is not the duty of an Opposition to believe that he was right.

This same year witnessed the opening fire of "Junius," which had no little effect in shattering the Grafton administration of which Hawke formed a part. The first letter of the series contains a deadly attack upon Grafton, North, Granby, Weymouth, Hillsborough, and Lord Mansfield. It was not likely that Hawke should escape. Junius dismisses him contemptuously enough :—"With respect to the navy I shall only say that this country is so highly indebted to Sir Edward Hawke, that no expense should be spared to secure him an honourable and affluent retreat." It was not by such artillery that the admiral

was likely to be routed ; but it was unfortunate for him that he did not resist Lord North's request to take his old post under the new *régime* of 1770. Very probably this request was backed by the King ; but Hawke had been placed at the head of the Admiralty by Chatham, and with Chatham he should have retired. By too great facility in obliging the new Premier, who wished not only to make use of a great name, but to exhibit a Government as little changed as possible from the former one, Hawke found himself in opposition to his old, and feebly supported by his new, friends ; and this at a moment when the threatened rupture with Spain laid a violent stress on his naval administration which he was quite unable to meet by himself, and which seems to have suddenly aged and worn him out, at least for a time.

The new Admiralty contained none but civilians. In the House of Commons Saunders and Keppel were bound, as Whig partisans, to pick holes in the policy of Lord North, even though in so doing they had to attack their old chief ; and Chatham himself, who had by this time nearly lost sight of all his old landmarks, condescended to vilify the Admiralty for not sending ships to sea, when the fact was that they could not be manned because Wilkes, emboldened by Chatham's own patronage, had exercised his whole influence in making impressment impossible. In vain the great orator expounded the law and custom of England ; in vain he insisted upon the absolute necessity of the practice of impressment, if England was to hold up her head among the nations ;

the demagogue laughed in his sleeve. It was very well to scold all round; Chatham had become a privileged person.

Fortunately, the firm attitude of the English Government in the matter of the Falkland Islands, as in the similar case of Nootka Sound, some years later, had a wholesome effect on the Courts of France and Spain. The fleets which were ordered to be equipped, and the names of the officers to be appointed in command, convinced these Powers,—which were not a bit better prepared than the self-abused English,—that the hour had not yet come; and they put the matter by till the revolt of the American colonies seemed to afford them the opportunity for which they panted to recover the old position. Very shortly after this date there appeared, in the saloons of Paris, the man destined to destroy all their hopes.

Hawke had demanded, previously to this quarrel with Spain, an increase of four thousand men for the navy. He did not get them. The supplies, under a series of weak administrations, had been cramped. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep the ships at their proper establishment. When the sudden strain came, some ships that would not in the ordinary course of things have been allowed to leave the home ports, were sent out as guardships to Gibraltar, and, from their unsafe condition, were obliged to return. But none of the sixteen ships which were to form Howe's fleet were of this class. The same thing had happened in 1747, when Anson was virtually First Lord under Bedford's administration, and Admiral Medley reported that no less than eight of his ships

were not in a condition to continue abroad ;* and it was of frequent occurrence in the war.

This circumstance, however, which probably admits of some palliation, was sufficient to set Horace Walpole off in the following attack on naval administration generally, and that of Hawke in particular :—

> The ignorance, blunders, and want of spirit in Newcastle, Lord Anson, and Lord Hardwicke, at the beginning of the seven years' war, made way for the predominant genius of Mr. Pitt. . . . The murder of Admiral Byng was to palliate the loss of Minorca, which had been sacrificed by the negligence of Lord Anson, and by the Duke of Newcastle's panic of an invasion. . . . The navy was in a wretched condition. Lord Egmont, while at the head of the Admiralty, had wasted between four and five hundred thousand pounds on pompous additions to the dockyards. His successor, Sir Edward Hawke, though brave and fortunate a commander, had never been a man of abilities, and was now worn out, grown indolent, and was almost superannuated, paying so little attention to the fleet that the ships were rotted in harbour, and of five ordered to Gibraltar, four had returned as being in too bad a condition to proceed, and the fifth was found rotten before it went to sea.†

We have seen already how far Anson was liable to this indictment. Lord Egmont was no doubt perfectly right in enlarging the dockyards to suit increasing demands of space ; and as to Hawke, we may be sure this was the single fault which could be brought home to him, or we should have heard of more. His "abilities" as an officer we have gauged. Walpole would certainly have treated the Duke of Wellington with the same contempt. The charge of "indolence"

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* "Bedford Correspondence," vol. i. p. 285

† "Mem. of Geo. III.," vol. iv. p. 204

is incredible, and wholly unsupported. Let us read it in the light of Keppel's statement which describes his chief's conduct at the Board.* "Worn out" he probably was; and at sixty-six might well be "superannuated." His health had, however, again broken down, as it often had before under unusual pressure; and in January, 1771, he sent in his resignation.

Lord Sandwich succeeded Hawke, and acted upon his plans; but fell short of the success which Hawke had attained in keeping up the supply of new ships.† He failed to do so for the same reason that his predecessor had found himself on the eve of a war without a sufficient number in hand. Until the younger Pitt arose, no Government was strong enough to raise sufficient taxes to keep up a proper peace-establishment. Eight years after Hawke had resigned, the tables were turned. Sandwich, for whom he had made room, and whose bad moral character seriously impeded the exercise of his undoubted ability, found himself, during the strain of the new war, attacked much as Anson and Hawke had been attacked in their day. Augustus Hervey, now Earl of Bristol, Hawke's old trusted captain, brought forward a motion, in 1779, to the effect that "the navy had rapidly decayed since the resignation of Lord Hawke, while its expense had increased." All that Sandwich could reply was that he was not solely, but jointly, responsible for the employment of the naval force, which was determined in the Cabinet, and finally sanctioned by the King: he was only an-

* See *Ante*, p. 8.

† "A Seaman's Remarks, &c.," "Life of Keppel," vol. ii. p. 331

swerable for the use or abuse of the means placed peculiarly in his hands. This excuse, though it is always in the power of a First Lord to resign (as some have, when their province has been egregiously interfered with by a Cabinet), was more to the purpose than the public knew. In some notes of Hawke's on his own resignation he remarks:—"The late peace-establishment will not keep up fourscore ships of the line in perfect repair, especially when it is clipped ten or twelve thousand every year, by the Minister, of the Extraordinary Estimate." This explains the fact of the rotten ships, when there was a sudden call for the whole fleet.

Several of the King's letters to Hawke are preserved in the family papers. One of them refers to his young brother the Duke of Cumberland, an inexperienced admiral cruising in the Mediterranean. It is written with the view of preventing difficulties which might arise from the French, who, the King hears, "are uncivil to a very unwarrantable degree to every ship that comes near to Corsica." Another refers to Captain Wallis' famous voyage of discovery:—"He seems to have shown great assiduity in this service, and appears very worthy of reward." The third is as follows:—

RICHMOND LODGE,

SIR EDWARD HAWKE, October 13th, 1770.

The great spirit shewed by the officers of the Navy on this occasion [the threatened war with Spain] makes me desirous of contributing as much as possible to their encouragement. I therefore think the promotion of flag-officers, including Lord Howe, would be properly timed. If you are of that opinion I shall be desirous of seeing you with the list, and those you may

judge best suited for the superannuated list. I cannot conclude without acquainting you that Sir Charles Knowles desired Lord Rochford to acquaint me that he had received an offer to go into the Russian service, where he is to receive an allowance of £2,000 per annum. I said I should willingly consent to what was so much for the admiral's advantage, but thought he could not in that case remain rear-admiral of the fleet, though perhaps he might be permitted to remain in the list of admirals, but that I should with regard to this affair, talk with you before I gave any positive answer.

GEORGE R.

A good deal has been said about the King's bad spelling. The above letter is copied precisely from the original autograph in every respect, and there is not a word ill spelt in it. Perhaps the instances which occur in the letters to Lord North may betray the stealthy footsteps of the disease which so often incapacitated the King, and may have made him at times careless and forgetful of common things.

We may complete our notice of the way in which Hawke's tenure of his seat at the Admiralty was regarded, by referring to two anonymous letters which appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1770. It was not to be expected that he should escape scurrilous attacks; and the sting of the first of these letters lies in the imputation of avarice as the ground for his not having resigned his seat. It was an easy charge to make, but it is left unsupported by the writer in any single respect. He was answered in the following month by one who was equally opposed to Hawke's politics, and equally bitter against Lord North. He demands, however, fair play, and reminding his opponent that he has not substantiated his

charge, bids him remember that Sir Edward Hawke's having "rescued three kingdoms from the immediate danger of foreign invasion, and perhaps from total destruction, is known to the whole world." He then draws a favourable comparison between him and a former First Lord of the Admiralty:—"You cannot say of him that he is proud, imperious, and inaccessible, that his servants must be bribed to gain admittance, even for a memorial, &c. . . . If Sir Edward Hawke errs, 'tis not from insolence; if he cannot do right, it is want of power in his office. . . . Let us separate the admiral from the commissioner. While we look at one with honour and esteem, 'tis difficult to behold the other with disgust. Sir Edward Hawke is a character ever to be admired as a brave and gallant seaman. Politics may not be his *forte;* and surely he has not yet offended past redemption. Let us awhile suspend our judgment of this truly great man; and let us remember that he was as much a favourite with his late Royal Master for the goodness as for the bravery of his heart."

Hawke's services as First Lord of the Admiralty, taken along with Chatham's appointments, require a word, at the conclusion of this chapter, on the vexed question whether naval men or civilians make the best First Lords. Sir John Barrow, in his "Life of Lord Howe,"* has argued it with much ability, and sums up in favour of civilians. This he does upon two main grounds, the certainty that naval First Lords will show a partiality to those who have served

* Pp. 175, 193.

under them, and their want of the general knowledge necessary for a mixed position, half naval, half civil. The civil First Lord, assisted by naval men, is his ideal ; and the custom of successive Governments has followed that direction.

Taking the subject in its general aspect, it will not be found easy to dispute his position ; but it requires a proviso. To place a civilian at the head of the Admiralty, is an artificial and unnatural expedient, and should therefore not be too rigidly applied. If an Anson or a Hawke can be found, he should take precedence of any civilian. The same may be said of a Howe or a St. Vincent, who were First Lords. Rodney, Collingwood, and others might be named who, if placed in that position, would probably have governed the navy better than any civilian. Lord Barham was one of the best First Lords, though, unlike the others named, he was scarcely at the head of his profession.

The naval First Lord should be the acknowledged head, a man who has shown first-rate ability all through a distinguished career, a man who has seen war-service and made opportunities, and who has acquired the tact and "general knowledge" which is not so rare among naval officers as Sir John Barrow supposed. In times of peace it will, of course, be difficult to find the right man ; nor is it of so much consequence ; but in periods of war, if the triumphs of Lord Chatham are to be repeated, it may be well to remember his practice, and we must suppose his opinion, as to the proper method of governing the Royal Navy.

CHAPTER XI.

PEERAGE, RETIREMENT, AND DEATH. 1771—1781.

WHEN Hawke resigned his seat at the Admiralty on the ground of health, he must have been flattered at the following kind expressions from Lord Rochford, the Secretary of State, dated January 11th, 1771 :—

> I was favoured with your letter last night, and was extremely unhappy to have a letter of that sort from you to lay before the King, for no one can have a higher opinion than I have of the able and disinterested manner with which you have served the King so faithfully for so many years. When I had the honour this day to acquaint the King with your intentions, His Majesty was pleased to express in the strongest terms how sensible he was of the loss of so able and so gallant an officer, and regretted very much the bad state of your health which obliged you to come to this resolution.

But how came the grant of a peerage, which was not conferred till 1776, to be again neglected? The retirement of the victor of Quiberon, now growing old and worn out, after five years' service at the head of the Admiralty, and accompanied by the sincere regrets of a Sovereign who honoured and trusted him, might seem to have been the most natural occasion in the world for conferring such a distinction. There

were no doubt two reasons. The Swathling monument suggests one. Hawke never asked, nor desired anyone to ask, for such a favour. It was his character through life. He never even asked a favour for his officers unless they were the senior of their rank, or on some such irresistible ground. It was not his way. Perhaps there was some pride at the bottom of it. At any rate there was a great deal of dignity, and it was exceedingly rare. Distinguished officers like Amherst did not feel this compunction. Even the high-minded Lord Howe is found haggling for offices and favours.*

Nor could political services be obtained without the bribe of peerages. What was the King, in the extremity of his early difficulties, to do? He fought manfully against the pressure put upon him, and only succumbed when he was driven to bay. In 1766 he attempted to obtain the Duke of Bedford's aid towards forming a Government, offering to call his eldest son to the Upper House, and to appoint Lord Gower to office. So exorbitant, however, were the demands of the "Bloomsbury gang" for Garters, peerages, and places that the King with good reason declared their demands to be too extravagant, and the negotiation was accordingly broken off. Walpole tells us, in 1768, that when Amherst asked for a peerage he was told that the King was so teased for them that he had given orders "none should be mentioned more,"† and in 1776, that "the King had involved

* "King's Correspondence with Lord North," p. 133.

† "Mem. Geo. III.," vol. iv.

himself in so many promises, and so many coronets had been asked, that for some years no peers had been created."*

This, then, was the second reason. Not only did the modesty of the hero stand in the way, but the King could not afford to make peers. At last he found himself able to break through his self-imposed restrictions, and bestow the rewards which are due from a Sovereign to real and distinguished merit. Even Walpole, on that occasion, finds no fault:—"Sir Edward Hawke was one of the principal heroes of the last war."† It was an "unsolicited peerage." We have no record of how it affected the old man. Probably he had ceased to care about it, if he ever had cared at all.‡

But Lord Hawke had not ceased to care for the fortunes of others. The only notice preserved of the admiral's retirement, from 1771 to his death in 1781, is the extraordinary interest he took in Keppel's court-martial. What his feelings were about the American War, which broke out so soon after he retired from office, we have no means of judging; but when France and Spain joined in the fray, it had no doubt aroused all his patriotic feelings. As the colleague of Chatham and Keppel he must have observed with pain the processes by which the country had drifted into the colonial quarrel; but when the

* "Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 35.

† *Ibid.*

‡ As we have now arrived at the end of Lord Hawke's services may be mentioned that he became vice-admiral of Great Britain 1765. He had attained the rank of admiral in February 1757.

old enemies, whom his own arm had humbled in the dust, came forth once more, and, taking advantage of the civil contest in which Great Britain was engaged, again threatened to invade her inviolable shores, the old man's blood rushed back with its youthful velocity, and his spirit stirred with every pulse of the popular emotion. His old friend and pupil, Keppel, personally pressed by the King, though a member of the Opposition, had been called to the front in the national emergency, and placed at the head of such a fleet as Sandwich could muster. It was inferior to that of France under D'Orvilliers, but Keppel's popularity with the service stood the country in good stead when ships had to be manned; and in June he found himself blockading the enemy off his old station at Brest.

It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of the famous incidents of this naval campaign. The subject of our memoir was only indirectly concerned in it through the memorial to the King, which he signed at the head of a body of twelve distinguished admirals. There is no obscurity in the affair, except so far as it is cast around us by the partisan spirit in which it was regarded both at and since those times; and, further, in so popular a book as Lord Stanhope's "History of England" will be found a concise and impartial summary, quite sufficient for all who are not called upon to make a complete investigation of the subject. But it so happens that among the Hawke Papers are preserved two very interesting letters, which it would be a pity not to publish, from Keppel himself, and from Lord Rockingham; and these will

necessitate a few remarks which might otherwise have been avoided.

Excellent officer as Keppel was, he set out from the very first with what many people have considered a mistake. Soon after he arrived off Brest, finding, on board a frigate which he had seized papers giving the strength of the enemy as far superior to his own, he at once, without further investigation as to the genuine character of the papers, or calling a Council of War, returned to Portsmouth for reinforcements. This created a bad impression upon friends and foes. At home it was held to be a retreat, and compared with Byng's. It might, however, be defended on the ground of the responsibility attaching to the commander of England's only fleet—for such it was,—and of obedience to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Instructions he had received. Nothing more would have been heard of it, had the battle which ensued on July 27th been decisive. But when the fleets met off Ushant they were now nearly equal; indeed the English, from having cut off two ships, were a little superior, and victory was expected, as a matter of course, under such circumstances. As it was, the battle was just as indecisive as Pocock's or Hughes' actions in the Indian Ocean; and Keppel was fairly out-manœuvred by an enemy who had been beaten, as usual, when any ships got near enough to practise old English tactics. It is scarcely fair to blame this brave officer for not doing what a Hawke or a Rodney would most certainly have done. The prudence which he evinced in trying to keep his fleet together must have been painful to such a man; but he lost his

opportunity by contenting himself with cannonades on opposite tacks, in line.

All this, however, might have been retrieved had it not been for one of those mistakes to which sea-fights are liable, and which was aggravated by the time lost in sending messages which the existing signals were not adequate to convey. Keppel's two gallant vice-admirals, Harland and Sir Hugh Palliser,* had been engaged in the thickest of the fight ; after which the first was still in a condition to understand and obey his chief's signals for drawing the whole fleet together for a final combat ; the second was not. But strangely enough neither did Palliser make his crippled position known to the admiral by signal ; nor did Keppel, while keeping his general signal flying, and making the pendants of other ships to draw attention to it, do the same to Palliser ; nor did any message reach the latter officer till late in the evening. The result was a misunderstanding, without heinous fault on either side ; but it led to the failure. Keppel could not close with the French because his fleet was not in hand ; and he hoped for better luck in the morning. When morning broke, the French were found to have made off to such a distance that Keppel decided not to pursue them.

Still, in a sense, it was a victory. The alarm of a hostile fleet in the Channel was dissipated for the present ; the English had driven off the French force, only a little inferior to itself, with loss ; and such a

* He spelt his name "Pallisser" ; but as all the world has conspired to call him "Palliser," it is of no use to try and stem the tide.

favourite as Keppel could hardly do wrong. His despatch was somewhat obscure; and as it failed to notice the important events of the afternoon of the 27th, it was misleading; but it did not at first attract much attention. What turned out unfortunately for Keppel afterwards, was that he said at the end of this document :—"The spirited conduct of Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, and the captains of the fleet, supported by their officers and men, deserves much commendation."

When the period of courts-martial arrived, it seemed that this praise was given with a mental reservation; for the battle before the Courts raged over the accusation of Keppel that Palliser's misconduct was the cause of the failure. Yet it seems clear by the following letter to Lord Hawke that Keppel had not felt this at first, but thought of nothing else in the matter beyond the villainous trick of the enemy in leading him to believe that the battle was to be renewed, when he only meant running away. Hawke, blinded a little, we must suppose by friendship, seems to have written—his letter is not preserved—to congratulate Keppel on his engagement and his arrival at Plymouth. The following reply is among the Hawke papers :—

MOUNT EDGCUMBE,
August 11th, 1778.

MY LORD,

I received the honour of your Lordship's letter of the 7th instant, from Sunbury, this day. Believe me your approbation of my conduct conveys to me more satisfaction than I can express, as it confirms me in the zeal I ever hope to show in the support of the honour of the flag, and practically in continuing in the good opinion of one whose example is ever before me

and with whom I served so much of my time in my younger days. I flatter myself if the French had not run off in the night, my finishing the following day would have been more brilliant and decisive. The French accounts value themselves upon the afternoon of the battle. Indeed, their behaviour operated so strongly with me that I had not a doubt of their fighting me fairly the next day, which I expressed in my public letter. If they were as stout as they pretend to be, it is certain they might have begun again in the afternoon, but I believe what I have said, that they were so beaten that this plan was merely bravado and trick to get away in the dark, which they did at midnight, leaving two frigates and a ship with lights to deceive us. They have dared to assert the English fleet put out their lights, a lie that everybody in the fleet can contradict. It is not my business to follow every falsity they spread, but to get again to sea with as little loss of time as possible. Admiral Campbell is sensible of your kind notice of him, and is proud of it. I shall make your compliments to Sir Robert Harland and Sir Hugh Palliser. The captains will, I know, be thankful for your just opinion of them. They are, indeed, fine officers, and the ships are fine. Some of them, indeed, want more experience in discipline to do all that can be expected from them, but a complete fleet cannot be formed in a day. Our greatest want is petty officers, and that deficiency is general. I must once more thank your Lordship for the handsome attention you have so obligingly shown me. It is a certificate that I much value myself upon.

I am, &c.,
A. KEPPEL

The grateful feeling shown in this letter was, no doubt, enhanced by the murmurs which had begun to rise. Those murmurs gathered strength after the fleet had again sailed, and had looked about for the Frenchmen in vain. The opportunity was gone; and the national spirit which had been fed so high in the previous war, expressed itself in every form of annoyance

and disappointment. Whose fault had it been? Why was there no enquiry? Terror added to these feelings its peculiar vehemence and injustice; and party spirit, now at its extreme height, fanned the fuel into a flame. After such a different result of a naval battle from those which had of old crushed the enemy, would not even Spain venture forth once more?—as she soon did. With the whole of the national resources expended on the American War, in which the best commanders were making shipwreck of their reputation, how was the country to stand up against France and Spain? The country had indeed backed the King and the Government in the new civil war, but all the oratory was against them, all the active forces of the national intellect were on the other side. The effect of Chatham's dying words, beseeching the country never to grant independence to its colonies, had already passed away, and the people were beginning to realise, under the prospect of an immediate struggle for existence, what a task they had undertaken. Keppel had been the strongest Whig politician the navy had ever sent to Parliament; and, as Burke's splendid panegyric, in his "Letter to a Noble Lord," abundantly shows, the adored favourite of his political friends, quite as much as of the seamen of the fleet. The Keppels were famous for their delightful manners; and the Admiral's deeds truly deserved admiration. It was clear that whatever else happened, he must be pulled through.

Fortunately for the admiral there was a scapegoat. Sir Hugh Palliser, an officer of gallantry and distinc-

tion, but of a reputation far below that of Keppel,—for though an older man, he had not been brought forward early in life,—was a Lord of the unpopular Admiralty over which Sandwich presided, and a Tory Member of Parliament. He had, however, always been a friend and admirer of Keppel, and the latter appears to have owed his command of the fleet to Palliser's own strong recommendation.* He had fought with the utmost courage in the battle, his ship having been very severely handled; and, though he had made a mistake, as we have seen, had no idea, especially after the Admiral's despatch, that he deserved anything but praise. When the fleet returned again in the autumn, what was his astonishment to find that the popular indignation had already turned against himself instead of Keppel!

The interval had been diligently used. The favourite's failure had been a trick of the Machiavellian Admiralty. Palliser had been sent out expressly to prevent a victory. What could be more clear? Had he not held back at the critical moment when the signal to join the Admiral had been flying for hours? This became the established theory of the battle. It was not surprising that a man of a somewhat proud and overbearing character like Palliser should refuse to bear such imputations, and he made the mistake of defending himself in a public newspaper, instead of instantly demanding an enquiry into his own conduct. Keppel, when called on to confirm his subordinate's statement of the circumstances, declined.

* Charnock's "*Biog. Nav.*," vol. v. p. 489.

Palliser now made another mistake; and after an unseemly altercation in the House of Commons with his chief, demanded a court-martial on him, and brought forward a series of most damaging charges. This was felt to be a high-handed use of his position as a Lord of the Admiralty, and Keppel at once became a martyr. He had run a narrow risk of being condemned like another Byng; he now figured as another Vernon. The King and the Government, North, Sandwich, and Palliser, shrank up into dwarf-like dimensions. The small form of Keppel swelled into the proportions of a giant. The Tories were silenced; the Whigs filled the whole air.

There was in truth a great deal to be said against Palliser's course of proceeding, and this it was which brought Hawke on the stage. The memorial to the King, begging him to interpose and stop the court-martial now demanded, would have carried little weight except for his great name. It was an unprecedented step, and, though it failed in its immediate object, it influenced opinion. The last paragraph alone need be printed in this place; it sums up the rest:—

We therefore humbly represent, in behalf of public order as well as of the discipline of the navy, to your Majesty the dangers of long-concealed and afterwards precipitately adopted charges, and of all recriminating accusations of subordinate officers against their commander-in-chief, and particularly the mischief and scandal of permitting men who are at once in high office and subordinate military command, previous to their making such accusations, to attempt to corrupt the public judgment by the publication of libels on their officers in a common newspaper, thereby exciting mutiny in your Majesty's navy

as well as prejudicing of those who are to try the merits of the accusation against the said superior officer.

This memorial was signed by "the revered"* Hawke, Moore, the Duke of Bolton, Graves, Pigot, Harland, the Earl of Bristol, Young, Barton, Geary, Lord Shuldham, and Gayton. Most of these were Hawke's old followers, and some of them Tories. It will be observed that, though Lord Hawke did, as a matter of fact, approve of Keppel's conduct, neither here (nor in any other part of the paper) is there any expression of opinion on the questions to be tried. It was a protest against a line of action which the memorialists rightly judged to be *pessimi exempli*, and in that respect was valuable for the future. As the two courts-martial, on Keppel and Palliser, ended in the acquittal of both, it might seem that it was a pity Hawke's advice was not followed, and a great scandal prevented; but in truth such a course was now impossible. It was absolutely necessary for the reputation of two gallant officers in high command, and therefore for the whole service and the country at large, that both should be tried.

But it was unfortunate for the cause of justice that party feeling was now transported to such an extraordinary pitch of intensity that Keppel's trial was in reality a farce. Admiral Montagu, one of the members of the court who took the lead, was a rough and violent seaman, who had seen very little active service against the enemy, and was extravagantly devoted to Keppel. This man browbeat the adverse witnesses

*"Annual Register," 1780.

without mercy ; and the whole court was as much dominated by the enthusiasm in favour of Keppel as the courts which condemned Mathews and Byng were by the popular feeling of their respective times. A special Act of Parliament was passed to allow the court to be held on shore at Portsmouth instead of on board ship, its proper place ; and thus noble lords and ladies were able to enjoy the excitement without any danger of sea-sickness. The grim old garrison town was turned into a Bath or Tunbridge Wells. Princes of the Blood, in the persons of the Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland, ex-Prime Ministers, like the Marquis of Rockingham, leaders of the House of Lords like the Duke of Richmond, statesmen like Fox and Burke, came down and sat in court for whole days, persuading themselves that they were come to stand by their martyr and idol when he was to be shot like Byng by a tyrant Admiralty.* When we read the excited letters from these personages it sounds like a joke. If ever a man's head was safe Keppel's was.

The Marquis of Rockingham was, however, so considerable a person that his letter to Hawke, preserved among the Hawke papers, may at least amuse, and may possibly interest, some readers :—

My Lord,

The very noble part which your Lordship has acted in stating your opinion to the Crown on the odiousness and impropriety of a court-martial having been ordered on Admiral Keppel in consequence of charges and accusations made against him under the circumstances and in the manner they were, occasions

* See Burke's "Letters to a Noble Lord."

my venturing to intrude a letter upon you, as I am sure the account it will give your Lordship will afford you much satisfaction.

The court-martial has now had four sitting days. Each day produced circumstances that must give pleasure to every one who honours Mr. Keppel. The accusations and the accuser are continually meeting with disappointments and discomfitures. Your Lordship, I imagine, will have heard of the events and proceedings on three of the former days. On this day Captain Digby was called as a witness by Sir Hugh Palliser. It has been understood that Captain Digby's evidence would be much in support of the accusations. In my mind it has proved entirely otherwise. He hesitated, indeed, and did not give a direct and positive answer to the first question put by Admiral Montagu after his examination by Sir Hugh Palliser, but yet his answer was such as I think no man could give who thought Admiral Keppel guilty of that part of the charge.

Admiral Montagu's first question (which is understood to be a question from the whole court) amounts to requiring the opinion of the evidence whether Admiral Keppel on the day of the action had been guilty of any neglect in not doing his utmost to burn, sink, and destroy, &c., the French, or had conducted himself in an unofficer-like manner. Captain Digby said—"he had long highly honoured and esteemed Admiral Keppel as an officer, and he *did so still*." He added that he declined giving any further opinion, for that as an evidence he had stated facts *on which* he thought it was not for him but for the court to judge.

Admiral Montagu then put a question to Captain Digby—just reading to him the charge where Admiral Keppel is accused of having fled from the French fleet. The question he put was—"Did Admiral Keppel *run away* from the French fleet?" Captain Digby answered without hesitation, "No."

Tuesday night.

I was prevented from sending this letter to your Lordship last night [Tuesday]. Captain Digby was examined again this morning. Admiral Keppel put several questions to him,—many very material ones,—and I am happy to say that I do not think that *any one* of Sir Hugh Palliser's five charges against Admiral

Keppel has received support from Captain Digby's evidence. Captain Windsor of the "Fox" was the next witness called. I enclose to your Lordship a printed copy of Sir Hugh Palliser's letter (which was published in November in the "Morning Post"). I also enclose to your Lordship a minute of Captain Windsor's evidence. Your Lordship on comparing them will be astonished.

Wednesday night.

It was too late to send this letter last night [Wednesday], so that it is now Thursday night. Captain Hood was examined to-day. He began by a long speech, particularly relative to the alterations in his log-book. That matter rests at present till Admiral Keppel cross-examines him, which I suppose will be to-morrow. There are some matters in Captain Hood's evidence which may require answers, or rather which Admiral Keppel on cross-examining him will overset. The material part relates to the signals made early in the morning on the 27th, *by which* Captain Hood in part asserts that the fleet was *dispersed* and *scattered*. In regard to many of the charges Captain Hood's evidence contradicts them, particularly Sir Hugh Palliser's assertion that the "Formidable" was left unsupported. Captain Hood says his ship, the "Robust," the "Terrible," "Worcester," "America," "Elizabeth," and the "Egmont,"—he doubts in regard to the latter,—these five or six ships were *astern* of the "*Formidable*" *when she passed along the French line in action.* Admiral Montagu put two questions to Captain Hood: I enclose to your lordship the minute of them, and shall only express my satisfaction in remarking that the assertion of Admiral Keppel's flying from the French fleet is too difficult a matter for evidence to be got to swear to.

I really must apologize for troubling your Lordship with so long a letter. I confess that I feel so much joy every day with what passes at the court-martial that I could not refrain from communicating some circumstances to your Lordship, who, I was sure, would feel much satisfaction, pleasure, and comfort in hearing them. It is, too, with great satisfaction that I can inform your Lordship that so far from this business creating a *disunion in the fleet*, it will have *quite the contrary effect.* Nava

honour and naval integrity never shone brighter than they do at this moment here. The zeal in behalf of Admiral Keppel and the indignation against the attack and attackers seem to occupy the minds of all the best and ablest officers, and to extend itself through all the different ranks.

Captain Hood will be examined again to-morrow, as Sir Hugh Palliser had not finished to-day all that he intended to ask him. Admiral Keppel will then cross-examine Captain Hood, and all the business of the log-books will be the part whereon he will first commence.

Admiral Keppel is in good health and good spirits. He conducts himself with so much propriety and dignity, and with such ability, as wins upon the minds of all his hearers.

I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

Portsmouth, Thursday night, January 14th, 1779. ROCKINGHAM.

The great Whig ladies accompanied their relatives at this interesting scene, which lasted, with all its exciting circumstances, thirty days. Lady Rockingham, an excellent person, writes thus :—

When I met you in the street I was just returned from Admiral Keppel's trial. . . . I went to that place in great anxiety at such an event as a court-martial, appointed, in such haste, on so meritorious and beloved a friend ; but I went in much resignation of mind and the fullest trust in the Almighty Defender of injured innocence ; and I hope I returned with the strongest sense of gratitude.*

It will be observed from Lord Rockingham's letter that the special Act which allowed of the court being held on shore was scarcely needed. It was passed on the ground of the admiral's bad health. He was subject to gout ; but we see he was "in good health and good spirits." For the further explanation of the

* Letter to the Rev. John Burrows, *penes auctorem*.

details mentioned in the letter the reader is referred to the proceedings of the court-martial. Nor will any elaborate discussions be in place here. Suffice it to say that the painful and gratuitous charge against the admiral for "running away" grew out of the scattered state of the English fleet on the afternoon of the 27th, when the French drew up in good order, and ready to fight. Finding only twelve ships at hand to renew the combat, Keppel hauled down the signal to engage, and made one for line of battle. He then ordered Sir Robert Harland, who was to windward with his division, to run down and form line astern of him. This gave the appearance of retreat, but was really part of the process of getting the fleet together, which was frustrated by Palliser's crippled condition, as mentioned above ; while the action of the French in "standing after the British fleet," however strange a sight to Englishmen, could not be helped, their numbers being at the moment so superior.

As opinions of every kind have been freely hazarded on this celebrated court-martial, it is not of much consequence whether one more should be given. But, judging by the light of the Trials which have been already noticed in this book, it is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that Keppel committed certain errors in judgment both at first and at last. Of these it has been held that his failure on the 28th to pursue the enemy, who were still visible from the mast-head, was one ; and, even giving so experienced an officer, charged with so heavy a responsibility, the benefit of the doubt on that point, some notice should surely have been taken of the failure to bring the enemy to

a decisive action on the 27th. As it was, he got off with all the glory which could possibly have been acquired by the most successful officer; and that was certainly no advantage to the service. He supported himself, in one portion of his defence, by the example of "that truly great officer, Lord Hawke, who, rejecting all rules and forms, grasped at victory by an irregular attack," but dispassionate observers could hardly avoid the reflection that it was precisely because Keppel had only learnt part of his lesson, that he failed.

Palliser's charges were condemned by the court as "malicious and ill-founded." Perhaps they were; they were certainly ill-judged; but on his court-martial that officer escaped almost as well as his chief; indeed, his conduct was declared to have been "in many respects highly meritorious and exemplary."

The extravagant burst of joy at Keppel's acquittal in which Lord Hawke could not resist the temptation to join, though he must surely have had his own ideas as to Keppel's conduct, will be found concisely described by Lord Stanhope. Palliser was burnt in effigy, and his house sacked. "Perhaps," says Lord Sheffield, "no man was ever more cruelly used by the public through a virulent party spirit." Nor was Lord Rockingham right in prematurely asserting that the struggle had done no harm. It may have been necessary; but it produced insubordination, and even mutiny. Violent and unmeasured denunciations of an Administration, in which naval officers were drawn up in opposing ranks, and in which the populace were

invited to take part, could not but leave a mark. Neither officer was again employed at sea; which was indeed their own desire. Keppel ended his public career as First Lord of the Admiralty under his friend Lord Rockingham; and the rank of Viscount could only be grudged to so fine an officer, even though he failed to be a first-rate admiral, when judged by the niggard recompense doled out to Hawke; Palliser retired to the government of Greenwich Hospital.

A last, but most suggestive specimen of the aged admiral's character comes before us in connection with one of the consequences of the Keppel Court-martial. As that officer declined to serve the Government any longer, though at its greatest need, the command of the fleet had to be entrusted to one of Hawke's old friends, Sir Charles Hardy, and on his death, to another—Admiral, afterwards Sir Francis, Geary. The Spanish having joined the French in 1779, the combined squadrons were able to muster sixty-six line-of-battle ships against Hardy's thirty-six, and to insult the British coast with impunity. Hardy was not justified by the traditions then dominant in doing more than keep them at bay; and this he did with admirable skill. The enemy, however, ill-found and disunited, soon dispersed of his own accord, and Hardy, too old for so trying a responsibility, soon afterwards died. When Geary was appointed to command, and sent to blockade Brest in May, 1780, his old chief, now seventy-five, wrote him the following letter, and in August another. Both must be inserted. If betraying some marks of

fond old age, they at least display much amiability, and some touches of the old fire :—

My dear Sir, June 6th, 1780.

This is principally to thank you for the favour of your letter of the 3rd instant, and for all the kind acts you have been able to do for my person, which was doing everything in your power. . . . I find by the papers that you are getting ready for sea with all the despatch that is possible, and that you will sail the instant that it is in your power : and though I could wish this could get to your hands first, yet the times are so very pressing from many unfortunate events, that I think the sooner you can get to my old station off Brest the better it will be for my country. When you are there, watch those fellows as close as a cat watches a mouse ; and if once you have the good fortune to get up to them make much of them, and don't part with them easily.

Forgive my being so free : I love you. We have served long together, and I have your interest and happiness sincerely at heart. My dear friend, may God Almighty bless you, and may that all-powerful hand guide and protect you in the day of battle ; and that you may return with honour and glory to your country and family is the sincere and faithful wish of him who is most truly, my dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

Hawke.

Again :—

Sunbury,
26th August, 1780.

I am greatly obliged to you for the favour of your letter of the 20th on your arrival at Spithead ; indeed, it was more than I expected, well knowing the hurry and bustle you must be in on your first coming into port. I do not wonder at the men being sickly upon so long a cruise : six weeks is long enough in all conscience ; any time after that must be very hurtful to the men, and will occasion their falling down very fast. I hope in God they will soon recover, that you may be enabled to proceed to sea immediately, for by all accounts the enemy is

out, so that nothing can well stir from home with safety. I wish the Admiralty would see what was done in former times: it would make them act with more propriety, both for the good of officers and men. I take it for granted that the great ones will let you have no rest till they get you out to sea again.

Although I am in a good deal of pain, and much in the invalid order, yet I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of wishing you all imaginable good fortune when you go out again; and I trust in God your next cruise will prove to be a happy and glorious one, both for your country and yourself. My good friend, I have always wished you well, and have ever talked freely and openly to you upon every subject relative to the service. Recollect some of these passages; and for God's sake, if you should be so lucky as to get sight of the enemy, get as close to them as possible. Do not let them shuffle with you by engaging at a distance, but get within musket-shot if you can; that will be the way to gain great honour, and will be the means to make the action decisive. By doing this you will put it out of the power of any of the brawlers to find fault. I am fully persuaded you will do your part; therefore hope you will forgive my saying so much on the subject.

I find the Russians are gone from the Downs, so you will have no trouble about them. My good friend, God bless you. May the hand of Providence go with you and protect you in the day of battle, and grant you victory over our perfidious enemies; and may you return with honour to your country and family again! These are the sincere and hearty wishes of him who is most truly and faithfully, my dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

HAWKE.

Charnock, by whom these letters are given,* tells us that, in a postscript to one of his letters, Hawke tells Geary:—"I am glad you have got so excellent

* Vol. v. p. 187.

an officer with you as I am convinced Kempenfelt is : he will be of great service to you."

Geary is again mentioned in the following letter to the Hon. Admiral Barrington, with whom Hawke is about to send a young friend to sea :—

SUNBURY, June, 1780.

Permit me, my dear sir, to wish you joy of your new commander-in-chief [Geary]. I take him to be a good seaman, and believe he is a brave, honest, good-tempered man. I am only afraid of his being too easy, and that he will subject himself to be blamed, as Sir Charles Hardy was, for letting the discipline of the fleet come to nothing. I hope—for I wish him well—he will support the dignity of his high station in a proper manner, and that he will not let himself down, and make himself too cheap with the little people of the service.

What you say is too true. I am afraid our superiors have not their King and country so much at heart as they ought to have, otherwise they would think and act in a different manner to what they do. That pride, conceit, and folly in not consulting good men of the profession must of course throw everything into disorder and confusion ; and the thinking all men are alike in the service must bring the navy to destruction at last, unless Sir George Rodney, General Vaughan, and Sir Hugh Palliser will take us under their protection. You see what great things are done, and how greatly represented. Whatever you shall be concerned in I am convinced you will represent in a just and honourable manner, in its own fair and natural colours.

May the hand of Providence protect you in all your undertakings ; and may your cruise prove as fortunate as your own heart can desire.*

Thus the old man keeps up his last connection with his beloved profession. The words in which he begs his friend " never to let the enemy shuffle off, but get

* Hawke Papers.

as close to them as possible" were a legacy to the service, and they were not forgotten. They came with weight from one who had taught the navy how to put them in practice. The letter to Admiral Barrington, above quoted, betrays the heaving of the political swell which succeeded the storm of the Keppel court-martial. Palliser and Rodney were at the head of the naval Tories, as Hawke and Keppel were leaders of the naval Whigs. But if we consider the exceeding bitterness of the political conflict which raged from 1770 to 1784, when at last the younger Pitt broke upon the world, we shall understand that no one in a high position could possibly have kept himself entirely free from it. Not that party strife became any the less pronounced at the later period: but order and prosperity then began to reign in a manner which no one could have foreseen when our veteran left this last, almost despairing, letter for a future generation to unearth from its recesses. Rodney's despatches from the West Indies at this period are remarked upon by other writers as somewhat boastful; and there were plenty of people to expose any defect, jealous as they were in the highest degree, even in that hour of difficulty, of a Tory success. It required the brilliant victory of the Twelfth of April, 1782, to extinguish all such petty feelings, and restore its old tone to a profession which had grievously suffered by the events of the previous twenty years.

It is to be regretted that so few of Hawke's private letters have been preserved. We should probably have found in them many expressions of the same

hearty, affectionate nature as in the foregoing. But, without such help, we have seen enough to convince us that this great admiral learnt the road to success as much by his good heart as by his clear head and lofty character. He was a man of principle, and his principles were derived from the highest source.

On October 16th, 1781, the "Annual Register" has the following entry:—"Died, at Sunbury in Middlesex, Lord Hawke, Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, Admiral of the Fleet, President of the Maritime School, and an Elder Brother of the Trinity House." On the 18th, Walpole writing to Mann, and forgetting that "Hawke had never been a man of ability," remarks:—"Lord Hawke is dead, and does not seem to have left his mantle to anybody." If we had not already found it necessary to use Walpole's remarks with caution, this of itself would show him to be but little acquainted with affairs. Within six months of his use of this expression Rodney had won the only battle that could be ranked by the side of the victory of Quiberon since the days of Blake. Lord Sandwich knew better. A few weeks later (1781) he had written to Rodney:—"The fate of this Empire is in your hands, and I have no wish that it should be in any other."* By that victory off Dominica the labours of Chatham, Hawke, and Wolfe had been crowned; Great Britain shook off all the enemies that were furiously crowding and fastening upon her, the Peace of Versailles was made possible, and the breathing period of the next ten years granted, during which the son of Chatham might regenerate his country, and prepare her for the

* Mundy's "Rodney," vol. ii. p. 282.

mighty task which yet lay before her Imperial path. Lord Hawke had lived at Sunbury for some years, but his grave was to be by the side of that of the beloved wife who had died at Swathling five-and-twenty years before.

The history which has been here given scarcely requires any recapitulation. It comes out clear and sharp in connection with the twenty-three years (1739-1763) during which the aggressive conduct of France and Spain had forced England to wage a defensive war which led to the acquisition of her present Empire. Before that time we know but little of the Cornish barrister's son who married the young Yorkshire heiress. At the end of it he is at the head of his profession, and has established his position as the greatest officer that had yet appeared in the modern navies of Europe. Checked by many a stroke of bitter trial, we never find him failing in any work which he was given to do, except in the case of Rochefort, where we have seen that he was not, and was held not to be, responsible ; and we have had the means of forming some opinion as to the reasons why he was what Horace Walpole called "fortunate." We have watched his modest demeanour in prosperity, and his manly fortitude in adversity ; and this not only in military but civil affairs. If a junior is promoted before him he is the first to wish him joy. If honours and rewards are showered upon the unworthy, it makes no difference to him, though he must have known he was worthy of them. At the end of his life the peerage which should have marked the victory of Quiberon, or if not, the close of the war, or if not

then, the retirement from the Admiralty,—comes at last. Then men seem to discover that they have a hero among them, and call to mind his surpassing services. He is "the great and good," the "revered Lord Hawke," the "father of the navy," the last of a great race, the prophet whose mantle there is no one to take up. Amongst his negative merits it may be observed that he never once in his long career found himself called upon to deal with mutiny in his ship or fleet. Seamen and officers knew him too well.

Like all great men, he formed a school. In this respect he was a partner with Anson, of whom the same thing may be said. But it is assuredly true in a far greater degree of Lord Hawke. Most of the officers who, after the Peace of Paris, rose to distinction, had served under him; and some of them owned their debt. They carried on the traditions which he had planted, down to the present century. Especially was this the case, as has been pointed out in Chapter I., in the matter of decisive engagements. It was here that the transformation of naval warfare displayed itself, and it is in this vital point that all succeeding transformations will culminate in future times. Perhaps even Nelson, who was a post-captain when Hawke died, caught much more of his own noble spirit from the maxims and exploits of "the father of the navy" than he himself knew.

Down to the second quarter of the present century the old toast survived:—"May our officers have the eye of a Hawke and the heart of a Wolfe."

INDEX.

A.

Abercrombie, General, 186.
Aboukir, 228.
"Achilles," the ship, 133, 137, 196.
Act for allowing a court-martial to be held on shore, 307.
"Actæon," the ship, 212, 241.
Admiralty, the First Lords of, naval or civil, 293, 294.
Africa, 11, 186.
Aiguille, Fort de l', 140.
Aiguillon, Duc d', 240, 242.
Aix, Fort of, 142, 153.
Aix, Island of, 132, 140, 173.
Aix la Chapelle, Peace of, 82, 92, 170.
Albemarle, Lord, 268, 277.
Alberoni, 159.
"Alcide," the ship, 138.
Aldborough Hatch, 10, 15.
Algesiraz, 107.
"Amazon," the ship, 62.
Ambrose, Captain John, 35, 48.
America, 12, 96, 97, 114, 176; miserable state of affairs in (1759), 163.
"America" the ship, 137, 309.
American War, the, 297, 303.
Amherst, Lord, 121, 169, 170, 188, 296.
"Ann," the fireship, 40, 41.
Anne, Queen, 2, 98.
Anson, Lord, 5, 6, 17, 26, 55, *et passim*; death of, 271.
"Anson," the ship, 208.
"Antelope," the ship, 103, 104.
"Antigallican," the ship, 107.
Arbuthnot, Captain M., 235.
Austria, 28, 92.

B.

Baird, Captain Pat., 218.
Balance of power, the, 92.
Balfour, Captain, 211.
Barbadoes, 15, 17, 19.
"Barfleur," the ship, 35, 42, 132, 142.
Barham, Admiral Lord, 294.
Barking, 13, 15.
Barnett, Captain, 31.
Barré, Colonel, 285, 286.
Barrington, the Hon. Admiral, 124, 211, 316, 317.
Barrow, Sir John, 20, 271, 293.
Barton, Admiral, 306.
Basque Roads, 123, 161, 168.
"Béarn," the ship, 138.
Beaufort, Duchess of, 272.
Bedford, Fourth Duke of, 56, 77, 82, 83, 88, 94.

Bedford," the ship, 35, 36.
Bédoyère, Captain de la, 67.
Beer, constant complaints of bad, 66, 100, 198, 201, 202.
Belleisle, Marshal, 101, 243.
"Belliqueux," the ship, 208, 235.
Bentley, Captain Sir John, 67, 218.
Berkeley, Captain George, 36.
"Berwick," the ship, 12, 20-22, 25, 35, 52; men pressed for manning it, 22; illness of these men, 23.
Biron, Marshal, 283.
Biscay, Bay of, 6, 101, 179, 189, 191.
Bladen, Catherine Maria Frances, 14.
Bladen, Elizabeth, 9.
Bladen, Colonel Martin, 10, 13, 21; Controller of the Mint, 10; Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, 10.
Bladen, Dr. Thomas, 10.
Blake, Admiral, 2, 7, 318.
Blakeney, Governor, 101, 103.
Blayney, Lord, 10.
Bligh, General, 118, 184, 185.
Bocca Chica, the forts of, 31.
Bolingbroke, Lord, 94.
Bolton, Duke of, 306.
Bolton Percy, 16.
Bompart, Admiral M., 190, 205, 208, 212, 213, 215, 216.
Bordeaux, 124.
Bordeaux River, 132.
Boscawen, the Hon. Admiral, 9, 57-59, 61, 84, 97, 120, 121, 169, &c.
Boscawen, Mrs., 272.
Boston, U.S.A., 12, 18, 19.
Bourbon family, the, 27, 280.
"Boyne," the ship, 36, 48.
Boys, Commodore, 202.
Braddock, General, 116.
Brest, 21, 25, 70, 78, 99, 106, 164, 181, &c.; blockade of, 188-219; orders forbidding neutral vessels to enter there, 197, 198.
Breton, Cape, 56, 59, 92, 121, 169-171.
Brett, Admiral Sir Peircy, 57.
Bristol, people of, 161.
Bristol, Earl of, 306. *See* Hervey.
British Channel, the, 6, 11, 101, 103, 213.
Brittany, 233.
Broc, Marquis de, 243.
Brodrick, Admiral, 120, 137, 143, 148, 149, 205.
Brooke, Catharine, 14.
Brooke, Walter, 14.
"Buckingham," the ship, 36.
Buckle, Captain M., 137, 218.
"Burford," the ship, 133, 138, 218.
Burgoyne, Colonel, 268.
Burke, Edmund, 273, 307.
Burnaby, Sir William, 86, 87.
Burrish, Captain George, 24, 35, 48.
Burstow, Captain F., 235.
Burton Hall, co. York, 14.
Bute, Earl of, 269, 270.
Byng, Viscount Torrington, 5, 29, 55.
Byng, Admiral the Hon. John, 17, 31, 49, 95, 102-105, &c.
Byng, the Hon. Robert, Governor of Barbadoes, 17.
Byron, the Hon. Admiral John, 124, 137, 192.

C.

Cadiz, 53, 107, 203, 205.
Calais, 65.
Calcutta, Black Hole of, 164.
Calder, Sir Robert, 135.

"Cambridge," the ship, 35.
Campbell, Admiral J., 218, 237, 238.
Canada, 99, 121, 171, 263.
Cartagena, 118, 171.
Carteret, Lord Granville, 94, 247.
"Centaur," the ship, 204.
"Centurion," the ship, 58, 85.
Chalotais Monsieur de, 244.
Charente River, 137, 140, 148, 174, 230.
Charles III., King of Spain, 27, 264, 265.
Charles VI., Emperor, 18.
Chatellaillon, Bay of, 140, 143, 147, 157.
Chatham, Earl of (William Pitt), 8, 85, 94, 111, 112, 121, 276, 287 &c.
"Chatham," the ship, 221, 235.
Chesterfield, Earl of, 77, 92, 94, 161.
"Chichester," the frigate, 174, 175, 208.
"Chichester," the ship, 35, 48, 218.
"Chimère," the ship, 204.
Choiseul, Marquis de, 266.
Clarke, Colonel, 122, 144.
Clive, Lord, 84, 115.
Clue, M. de la, Admiral, 203, 204.
Codrington, Captain C., 109.
Colbert, French Minister, 140.
"Colchester," the ship, 196.
Collingwood, Captain, 109.
Collingwood, Lord, 230, 294.
Colonies, quarrels between English and French, 93.
Conflans, Marshal, 8, 195, 197, 208, 212, &c.
Conquet Bay, 196, 200.
"Constante," the ship, 36, 37.
Conway, Marshal, 118, 122, 123, 143, 150-152.
Cooper, Captain, 35.
Cornewall, Captain James, 35-37, 52.
Cornish, Admiral Sir Samuel, 268.
Cornwall, admirals from, 9.
Cornwallis, General Hon. E., 118, 151.
Corsica, 291.
Cotes, Captain Thomas, 67, 207, 212.
Council of War, after the battle off Ushant, 77-79; concerning the Rochefort Expedition, 143-146.
Courts-martial, 42, 46-50, 74, 79-81, 98, 135, 239, 305-312.
"Coventry," the ship, 132, 138, 220, 223, &c.
Cowes, 97, 128, 129.
Crown Point, 186.
Crozic, 222, 241.
Cumberland, Duke of (Prince William Augustus), 114-116, 161; (Prince Henry Frederick), 307.

D.

D'Aché, Admiral M., 186.
D'Amblimont, M., Captain, 67.
Darcy, Lord, 14.
Davies, Captain P., 218.
De Beaufremont, Admiral M., 195, 233.
De Court, Admiral M., 21, 33, 34, 37, 81.
"Defiance," the ship, 67, 212, 218, 222, &c.
De Grasse, Admiral Comte, 8.
De l'Angle, Captain Merrick, 35.
Denis, Admiral Sir Peter, 57, 58, 124, 137, 206, 234.
Deptford, 22.

De Ternay, M., Commodore, 268.
Dettingen, Battle of, 26.
"Devonshire," the ship, 58, 60-73, 81.
Digby, Captain R., 211, 218, 308, &c.
Digges, Captain Dudley, 235.
Dilke, Captain William, 35, 39, 48.
Docking, co. Norfolk, 9.
Dominica, 318.
"Dorsetshire," the ship, 24, 35, 36, 218, 222, 232.
D'Orvilliers, Admiral, 298.
Douglas, Captain, 137.
Dover, good beer from, 202.
"Dragon," the ship, 35, 36.
Drake, Captain F. S., 235.
Draper, General Sir W., 268.
Drummond, Captain Charles, 35.
Du Barri, Madame, 244.
"Dublin," the ship, 133.
Duchaffault, M., Captain, 67.
Duff, Captain, 194, 208, 210, 216, 232; his squadron at Quiberon, 235.
Duguay, Comte, Admiral, 67, 81, 100.
"Duke," the ship, 211, 218.
Dumet, Island of, 262.
Dunkirk, 202, 267.
"Dunkirk," the ship, 36, 138, 218.
Dupleix, M., 57.
Durell, Captain Philip, 67.
Durell, Captain Thomas, 11, 12.
Durouret, M., Captain, 67.
Dutch wars, the, 3.
Duvignault, M., Captain, 67.

E.

"Eagle," the ship, 62, 67, 68, 72.
East Indies, the, 53, 56, 70.
Edgcumbe, Captain the Hon. George, 192, 193, 218, 277.
"Edinburgh," the ship, 12, 67, 68.
Egmont, Earl of, 276, 289.
"Egmont," the ship, 309.
"Elizabeth," the ship, 36, 57, 199, 309.
English, Rev. Rob., 231, 255.
"Escort," the sloop, 132, 138.
"Essex," the ship, 35, 36, 41, 49, 130, 218, &c.
European Powers, international relations of, 26.
Evans, Captain T., 218.

F.

Fairfax, Sir William, 9.
Falconer, author of "The Shipwreck," 217.
Falkland Islands, 286, 288.
"Falkland," the ship, 221, &c.
"Fame," the ship, 208.
Family compacts between France and Spain, 106.
"Fantasque," the ship, 204.
Ferdinand of Brunswick, Prince, 186.
Ferrol, 268, 270.
"Fier," the ship, 204.
Finisterre, Cape, 57, 64, 99, 269; capture of a French squadron off, 5.
"Flamborough," the ship, 12, 13.
Fleets in line, principle of fighting the, 2; the practice of sailing in close order, 3.
Fleury, Cardinal, 26, 27, 265.
Florence, 27.
"Florissante," the ship, 174.

Fontainebleau, Treaty of, 27.
Forbes, Captain, 35-37, 52, 61, 186.
Fortescue, Captain W., 218.
Fortune, or Forton, near Gosport, 98.
Foster, Captain, 107.
"Foudroyant," the ship, 168, 208, 211.
Fouras, Fort, 136, 140, 147, 148, 174, 175, &c.
Fowke, General, 103.
Fox, Captain, 64, 67-69, 72.
Fox, the elder (Henry, 1st Lord Holland), 94, 307.
"Fox," the ship, 309.
France, 27, 71, 114, 115, &c.; the Court stops payment of interest on the National Debt, 252; collapse of the Colonial empire of, 266; descents on, 166-187; Navy of, 90, &c.
French Government, the, fishermen pressed into service by, 195.
French squadrons, as convoys, 56; instructions issued by the Lords Justices to intercept them, 99.
France and Spain, 2, 27, 28, 297, &c.
Frederick II., the "Great," 26, 122, 273.
Frederick, Prince of Wales, 94.
Frederick, Sir Charles, 215.
Frogmere, Captain Rowland, 36, 48.
Fromentière, M. de, Captain, 67.
Frontenac, Fort, 186.

G.

Gabaret, Commodore, 34.
Gambier, Captain J., 218.
Gardiner, Captain, 168.
Gascoigne, Captain John, 36.
Gayton, Admiral, 306.
Geary, Sir Francis, Admiral, 191, 206-209, 306, 313.
Genoa, 27.
George II., King, 2, 61, 77, 254, 260, 293.
George III., King, 254, 266, 274, 276, 287, 291, 292, 295, 298, 305.
Gibraltar, 101, 103, 104, 116, &c.
Straits of, 46, 53.
Girdlington, Captain Richard, 11.
"Gloucester," the ship, 61, 67.
Gloucester, Duke of (Prince William Henry), 307.
Goree, 186.
"Gosport," the ship, 29.
Grafton, Duke of, 280, 286.
Granby, Marquis of, 248, 286.
"Gratieuse," the ship, 204.
Graves, Admiral, 24, 141, 218, 306.
Greenwich Hospital, 283.
Grenville, George, Premier, 276.
Grenville, Captain Thomas, 57.
Guernsey, wine from, 201.
"Guerrière," the ship, 204.

H.

Haddock, Admiral, 21.
Halifax, Nova Scotia, 276.
Hammond, family of, 14.
Hanover, 50, 92, 101, 113, 114, 161.
Hanoverian Succession, the, 91.
Hanoverian troops, 90.
Hanway, Captain Thomas, 57, 67.
Hardwicke, First Earl of, 93, 289.
Hardy, Sir Charles, Admiral, 191, 217, 218, 233, 270, 313, 316.

Harland, Sir Robert, Admiral, 67, 72, 78, 300, 301, 302, 306, 311.
Harrison, Captain Henry, 67.
Harrison, Captain T., 235.
Haslar Hospital, 97.
Havana, capture of, 268.
Havre, 195, 202, 203, 263.
HAWKE, EDWARD LORD, Admiral: his place in history, 1-8; early history and services of (1705-1743), 9-20; at the battle off Toulon and in command of squadrons (1743-1746), 21-54; in the battle off Ushant (1747), 55-99; his position during the peace and at the opening of the Seven Years' War (1748-1756), 91-112; in the Rochefort expedition (1757), 113-165; his share in the descents on France (1758), 166-187; at the Blockade of Brest (1758), 188-219; at the Battle of Quiberon (1759), 220-256; his last services (1760-1771), 257-294; his peerage and retirement (1771-1781), 295-317; inscription on his monument in North Stoneham Church, 14, 15; "the father of the British Navy," 8; as Baron of Towton, 14; his victory over the Grand French Fleet, 1759, a poem, 255; receives the Freedom of the City of Dublin, 263; attains the rank of Admiral, 297; his death at Sunbury, 318; formed a school, 320.
Hawke, Catharine, Lady: her marriage, relatives, and epitaph 14-16; her death, 109.
Hawke, Mrs., mother of Lord Hawke, 14, 16.
Hawke, Frances, sister of Lord Hawke: her marriage to the Bishop of Dromore's son, 16.
Hawke House, at Sunbury, 16.
"Hawke," the ship, 138.
"Hector," the ship, 70.
Hemsworth, 9.
"Hercules," the ship, 198, 208, 218.
"Hero," the ship, 193, 200, 218, &c.
Hervey, Admiral A., Earl of Bristol, 192, 195-197, 209 210, 282, 290.
Hières, Bay of, 25, 31.
Hillsborough, Lord, 286.
Hodgson, General, 260.
Holburne, Admiral, 97, 99, 120, 163, 164, 177; dispersion and destruction of his fleet, 120.
Holderness, Lord, 122.
Hood, Admiral A. (Lord Bridport), 235, 309.
Hosier, Admiral, 11.
Howard, General, 124, 153.
Howe, Admiral Richard (Earl Howe), 5, 8, 117, 118, 124, 141, 176, 218, 262, &c.

I.

India, 57, 114, 115, 164, 186, &c.
"Infernal," the ship, 129.
Italy, 27, 28, 45, &c.

J.

Jacobites, the, 54.
Jamaica, 87.
"Jason," the ship, 127, 129.
Jervis, Admiral John, Earl Saint Vincent, 217.
Jonquière, M. de la, 56, 58.
"Juno," the ship, 196.

K.

Kempenfelt, Admiral, 271, 316.
"Kent," the ship, 67, 68, 69.
Keppel, Admiral Viscount, 8, 72, 85, 101, 124, 192, 218, &c.; his trial, 306, 307, &c.; joy at his acquittal, 312.
Keppel, Admiral Sir Harry, 254.
Kingsley, General, 260.
Kingston, Duchess of, 192.
"Kingston," the ship, 12, 35-37, 211, 218, &c.
"Kinsale," the ship, 11.
Knowles, Admiral Sir C., 61, 76, 122, 123, 133, 135, 136, 147, 292.

L.

La Mothe, M. Dubois de, Admiral, 79, 120, 155, 168.
"Le Bizarre," the ship, 219.
"Le Brilliant," the ship, 219.
Labourdonnais, M., 53.
Lagos, Boscawen at, 203.
La Pointe, Fort, 140.
Launceston, 9.
"Le Content," the ship, 67, 70.
"Le Dauphin Royal," the ship, 219.
"Le Dragon," the ship, 219.
Leeward Islands, the, 70.
"Le Formidable," the ship, 218, 232, 234.
"Le Fougueux," the ship, 67, 70, 80.
Le Four, the shoal, 222, 234.
Legge, the Hon. Commodore, 70, 72, 77, 83.
Leghorn, Hawke at, 108.
"Le Glorieux," the ship, 218.
"Le Juste," the ship, 219.
"Le Magnifique," the ship, 219, 224.
"Le Monarque," the ship, 67, 69, 70.
Lendrick, Captain, 197, 211.
"Le Neptune," the ship, 67, 70.
"Le Northumberland," the ship, 219.
"Leopard," the ship, 11.
"Le Robuste," the ship, 219.
"Le Severn," the ship, 67, 70, &c.
"Le Soleil Royal," the ship, 218, 222, 229, 243, 256.
"Le Solitaire," the ship, 219.
"Le Sphinx," the ship, 219.
Lestock, Admiral, 2, 21, 29, 32-34, 41, 42, 45, 47, 118.
"Le Superbe," the ship, 219, 221.
L'Étenduère, *chef d'escadre*, 67, 74.
"Le Terrible," the ship, 67, 69, 70, &c.
"Le Thésée," the ship, 218, 221, &c.
"Le Tonnant," the ship, 67, 69, 70, &c.
"Le Trident," the ship, 67.
"L'Éveillé," the ship, 219.
"L'Héros," 218, 221, 222, &c.
Lieutenants on half-pay, their wretched condition, 282.
Ligonier, General Lord, 122, 128.
"L'Inflexible," the ship, 219.
Lingen, Captain Joshua, 36.
"L'Intrépide," the ship, 67, 70, &c.
"Lion," the ship, 67, 68, 204.
Lippe, Count de la, 268.
Lisbon, 268, 269.

Lissa, or Leuthen, battle of, 163.
Lloyd, Captain James, 35, 40, 42, 43, 51.
Lockhart, Captain John, 235.
London newspapers, printers of, apologise to Parliament, 249.
London, good beer from, 202.
Long, Captain Robert, 36.
L'Orient, 46, 53, 118, 124.
"L'Orient," the ship, 218.
"L'Oriflamme," the ship, 204.
Loudoun, Lord, 163, 268.
Louis XIV., King, 93, 140, 266.
Louis XV., King, 27.
Louis, Port, transports at, 205.
Louisbourg, 59, 120, 146, 164, 168, 170; effect of the news of its capture, 186.
Lovett, Captain John, 35.
Lymington, 97.

M.

McKinley, Lieutenant, 128, 129.
Madame, Isle, 140, 174.
Madrid, 265.
Madrid, Court of, 116.
"Magnanime," the ship, 132, 133, 136, 142, 192, 212, 218, &c.
"Maidstone," the ship, 220, 221, 231, &c.
Majorca, 106.
Malmesbury, the first Lord, 265.
Manilla, 268.
Mann, Horace, Minister at Florence, 28, 274, 318.
Manners, Lord Charles, 248.
Mansfield, Earl of, 286.
Maplesden, Captain James, 218
Maria Theresa, Empress, 26, 106, 273.
Marlborough, Charles, third Duke of, 155, 183.
"Marlborough," the ship, 35-37, 41.
"Mars," the ship, 60, 218.
Martinique, 59, 71.
Mathews, Admiral, 2, 5, 20, 22, 26-29, 32-35, 52, 60, 81; appointed to the command of the English fleet (1742), 22.
Maule, Dr. Henry, bp. of Dromore, his son married to Frances, Lord Hawke's only sister, 16.
Mediterranean, the, 12, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 49, 56, &c.
Mediterranean Fleet, the, 50.
Medley, Admiral, 288.
"Medway," the ship, 174.
Medway, the river, 88.
"Melampe," the ship, 211.
Midwinter, Captain, 71.
Militia, the, 113.
Minden, battle of, 205, 252.
"Minerva," the ship, 221, &c.
"Minerve," the French ship, 204.
Minorca, 42, 100-102, 108, 111, 116, 154, 258, 289.
Mitchell, Commodore, 53.
"Modeste," the ship, 204.
Monckton, General, his success in the West Indies, 268.
"Monmouth," the ship, 62, 67, 168, 196, 210.
"Montagu," the ship, 196, 218.
Montagu, Admiral, 306, 308.
Montagu, Captain W., 57.
Montcalm, the Marquis de, 163.
Montreal, 263.
Moore, Sir John, Admiral, 65, 67, 71, 306.
Morbihan, 207, 216.

Mordaunt, General Sir John, 116, 118, 122-124, &c.

N.

"Namur," the ship, 31, 35, 37, 58, 204, 218.
Nantes, 205.
Naples, 108.
Napoleon Bonaparte, mentioned, 202, 227.
"Nassau," the ship, 35.
Naval tactics, improvement of in seventeenth century, 3; at the battle off Toulon, 41, 42; at the blockade of Brest, 203.
Naval uniform, orders concerning, 86, 87.
Navarro, Admiral Juan Josef, 34, 41, 44.
Navy, the, traditions of, broken by Hawke, 4, 5; undeserved reflections on, 159, 160.
Nelson, Lord, mentioned, 2, 5, 7, 8, 12, 118, 217, 275, 320.
"Neptune," the ship, 36, 39, 53, 132.
"Neptune Français," 239.
"Neptuno," Spanish ship, 39.
Newcastle, Thomas, second Duke of, 85, 94, 101, 102, 105, 161, 214, 289.
Newcastle Administration, the, its blunder in delaying Byng's expedition, 110.
New England station, 12.
Nightingale, Captain G., 235.
Nootka Sound, 288.
"Norfolk," the ship, 35, 36, 40.
Norris, Captain Harry, 62.
Norris, Captain Richard, 35, 48, 49, 52.
North America, 96; North American Expedition, 97. *See also* America.
North, Lord, 286, 287, 292.
"Norwich," the ship, 130.
"Nottingham," the ship, 67, 210, 211.

O.

O'Brien, Admiral Lucius, 218, 239.
"Ocean," the ship, 204.
Ogle, Admiral Sir Chaloner, 12.
Ohio, the river, 99.
Oleron, Isle of, 132, 138, 147.
"Ordnance," the ship, 215.
Ortegal, Cape, 269.
Osborn, Admiral Henry, 35, 37, 38, 41, 52, 101, 168.
Ourry, Captain, 241.

P.

Pacific, expedition to the, 55.
Palliser, Sir Hugh, 300, 301, 302, &c.
Paris, the Peace of, 18, 89, 272, 273, 320.
Parliament, supplies for the French War liberally granted by, 167; thanks of, 170, 247.
Parry, Captain, 211.
Passaro, Cape, battle of, 5.
Pelham, Mr., Prime Minister, 92.
Pelham Government, the, 27.
"Pelican," the ship, 138.
Perrie, Mr., 84.
Pett, Captain Robert, 35, 48.
Peyton, Commodore, 53.
Piedmont, 27.
Pigot, Admiral, 306.
Pitt, Lady Esther, 215.

Pitt, William. *See* Chatham, Earl of.
Plassey, Battle of, 106.
"Pluto," the ship, 137, 196.
Plymouth, 29, 53, 61, 70, 88, 100, 138, 193-195, 198, 199, 201, 202, 209, 211, 212.
Plymouth beer, enquiry as to the badness of, 201.
Pocock, Sir George, Admiral, 72, 85, 186, 187, 268, 276-278.
"Poder," the Spanish ship, 5, 36, 40, 51, 52.
Porchester Castle, 98.
Port Mahon, 24, 25, 101-103.
Port Philip, 104.
Portland, 97, 193.
"Portland," the ship, 11, 15, 18-20, 67; unhealthiness of her crew, 19.
Portobello, 2, 11, 17.
Portsmouth, 8, 10, 11, 82, 88, 98, 100, 103, 126, 153, 177, 178, 180, 202, 299.
Portsmouth, good beer from, 202.
"Postillion," the ship, 138.
Potter, Mr., M.P., 161.
Poyance Bay, 106.
Pretender, the Young (Charles Edward Stuart), 57.
Prideaux, General, 188.
"Princesa," the ship, 35, 39, 48.
"Princess Amelia," the ship, 268.
"Princess Caroline," the ship, 35, 37.
"Princess Louisa," the ship, 67, 68.
"Princess Royal," the ship, 23.
"Prudent," the French ship, 137.
Prussia, 92, 163.
Prussia, King of. *See* Frederick II.
Pulteney, Earl of Bath, 94.
Purvis, Captain Charles, 36.

Q.

Quebec, 146, 171, 188, 193, 238, 276.
Quiberon, 191, 192, 196, 206, 216, 319; battle of, 188; conquest of the French fleet at, mentioned, 6, 111, 318; list of battleships in the battle of, 218; failure of supplies after the battle of, 244.
Quimperley, 208.

R.

Rame Head, 217.
"Ramilies," the ship, 104, 123, 131, 132, 152, 171, 178, 181, 183, 199, 209, 214, 217, 245.
Ramilies, loss of, 217.
"Real," or "Royal Philip," the ship, 34, 40, 41, 44.
"Redoubtable," the French ship, 204.
"Resolution," the ship, 218, 222, &c.
"Revenge," the ship, 36, 212, 218, 224, &c.
Reynolds, Captain, 198.
Rhé, Isle of, 132, 134, 138.
Richelieu, Marshal, 161.
Richmond, Duke of, 307.
"Robust," the ship, 309.
Rochelle, 64, 141.
Rochefort, its excellent position for defence, 140.
Rochefort Expedition, the, 113-165; confusion produced by its failure, 161.

"Rochester," the ship, 192, 221, &c.
Rochford, Lord, 292, 295.
Rockingham, Lady, 310.
Rockingham, the Marquis of, 298, 307, 312.
Rodney, Admiral Lord, 2, 5, 8, 67, 124, 147, 203, 263, 283, 316, 317.
Roquefeuil, Admiral de, 25, 27, 28.
Rossbach, victory of, 163, 166.
Rowley, Admiral Sir Joshua, 218.
Rowley, Admiral Sir William, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 50, 52.
Rowzier, Captain, 11.
"Royal George," the ship, 214, 217, 218, 220, 229, 232, 233; fire on board of, 270; loss of, 271.
Royal Marines, first organisation of, 95.
"Royal Oak," the ship, 35, 36, 48.
"Royal William," the ship, 132.
Royston, Lord, 105.
"Rupert," the ship, 35, 36, 48.
Russel, Captain John, 35.
"Russell," the ship, 36, 37.
Russia, 135.
Ruthven, Lord, 10.

S.

Sackville, Lord George, 155.
St. André, M. du Verger, Admiral, 195, 232, 240.
St. Cas, disaster at, 118, 146, 158, 184, 185, 240.
St. Cleather, 9.
St. George, M. de, 56.
St. Lawrence, 171.
St. Malo, 183, 184.
St. Philip's fort, Minorca, 106.
Sandwich, Earl of, 56, 92, 95, 276, 281, 290, 298.
"Sandwich," the ship, 208.
"Santa Isabel," the ship, 36.
"Sapphire" the ship, 221, &c.
Sardinia, Court of, 25.
Sardinia, King of, 31, 104, 106.
Saumarez, Captain Philip, 57, 67, 69, 235.
Saunders, Admiral Sir C., 67, 103, 112, 121, 238, 276, 277, &c.
"Savage," the ship, 97.
Saxe, Marshal, 27, 28, 101.
Saxton, 14.
"Scarborough," the ship, 12.
Scarthingwell Hall, 14.
Sclater, Captain George, 36, 48.
Scotland, 113.
Scott, Captain Arthur, 67, 72.
"Seahorse," the ship, 11.
Seamanship, Hawke's training in, 13.
"Sérieux," the ship, 58.
Seven Years' War, the, 66, 85, 91, 189, 251.
Ships, list of, at the battle off Toulon, 35, 36; at the battle off Ushant, 67; destroyed or put to flight by Boscawen, 204; at the battle of Quiberon, 218, 219; in Commodore Duff's squadron, 235; failure to keep them in repair, 291.
Shirley, Captain Thomas, 218.
Shirley, Captain the Hon. W., 218.
Shovel, Admiral Sir Cloudesley, 262.
Shuldham, Admiral Lord, 306.
Smith, Admiral Thomas, 29.
"Somerset," the ship, 36, 37, 48.
Southampton, 11, 97, 125.
"Souverain," the ship, 204.
Spain, 2, 10, 12, 18, 56, 90, 264, 288, 297.

Speke, Captain H., 218.
Spithead, 96, 104, 119, 123, 128, 129, 153, 175, 181, 182, 267, 268, 271, 314.
Stade or Closter-seven, Convention of, 154, 161, 163.
Stanhope, Fifth Earl, English History by, 250, 251, 265, 312.
Stanhope, Captain Sir T., 218.
Stepney, Captain George, 36.
Stevens, Captain Charles, 67.
"Stirling Castle," the ship, 35.
Stoneham, North, monument at, 11, 14.
Storr, Captain John, 218.
Strachan, Captain J., 235.
Sunbury, co. Middlesex, 16, 318, 319.
Swathling, 14, 16, 53, 182, 319.
"Swiftsure," the ship, 218, 224, &c.

T.

Taylor, Captain, 194, 217.
"Téméraire," the ship, 204.
"Temple," the ship, 218.
Tencin, Cardinal, 26, 28, 202.
"Terrible," the ship, 34, 96, 309.
Thames, Mr., 125, 126, 127.
Thames, the river, 88.
Thierri, French pilot, 122, 132, 176.
Thurot, M., the French Captain, 202.
"Tilbury," the ship, 67, 69.
Tintagel Head, 9.
Torbay, 194, 213, 220, 269.
"Torbay," the ship, 36, 132, 218.
Torrington, the second Lord. *See* Byng.
Tortugas, the, 17.
Toulon, 28, 106, 203, 244; battle off, 2, 5, 21-54, 61; French and Spanish fleets at, 21.
Townshend, Admiral the Hon. George, 35.
Towry, Captain John, 36.
Towton Hall, 14.
Trade and Plantations, Col. Bladen, Commissioner of, 10.
Transports, delay on account of, in Rochefort expedition, 125, &c.
Treriven or Treraven, 9.
"Triton," the ship, 204.
Turin, 25, 27.
Tuscany, 27.
Tyrawley, General Lord, 103.
Tyrrell, Captain, 209, 211.

U.

"Union," the ship, 218.
Ushant, 64, 78, 99, 194, 216, 231, 299; battle off, 55-90.
Utrecht, Peace of, mentioned, 273.

V.

Vannes, 205.
Vauban, 141.
Vaudreuil, Comte de, Captain, 67.
Vaughan, General, 316.
"Vengeance," the ship, 208, 221, 235.
"Venus," the ship, 221, 235.
Vernon, Admiral, 2, 17, 31, 59, 84, 87, 118.
Versailles, Peace of, 318.
Victoria, Marquis de la, 44.
Victualling, neglect of, at the blockade of Brest, 198.
Vilaine, the river, 230, 257.
"Viper," the sloop, 133, 138, 153.

W.

Wager, Admiral Sir C., 31.
Waldegrave, General, 155, 183.
Wall, Spanish Prime Minister, 264.
Wallis, Captain, 291.
Walpole, Horace, the author, 46, 59, 102, 161, 192, 225, 236, 273-277, &c.
Walpole, Sir Robert, 10, 27, 91.
Warren, Admiral Sir Peter, 12, 56-66, 71, 79, 89.
"Warspite," the ship, 218.
"Warwick Castle," the ship, 35.
Watson, Admiral Charles, 35, 67.
"Weazle," the sloop, 70.
Wentworth, General, 116, 118.
West, Admiral Temple, 35, 57, 103, 104, 120.
West Indian Station, 12, 17.
West Indies, 2, 11, 15, 18, 22, 53, 59, 87, 99, 107, 207, 268, 317.
"Western Squadron," the, 61, 63, 64.
Westminster Abbey, 7, 72, 248.
Weymouth, Lord, 286.
Whig ladies, their interest in Admiral Keppel's trial, 310.
Whitwell, Captain, 211.
Wight, Isle of, 125, 144.
Wilkes, John, 280.
Willet, Captain W. S., 218.
William III., King, wars of, 2.
William Henry, Fort, 163.
Williams, Captain Edmund, 35, 48.
Williamstadt, 128, 129.
Windsor, Captain, 309.
"Windsor," the ship, 61, 62, 67, 208.
"Wolf," the ship, 12.
Wolfe, General, 115, 121, 131, 133, 145, 320.
Woolwich, 11.
"Worcester," the ship, 309.
Wright, Fortunatus, 108.
Wyndham, Sir William, 94.

Y.

Yarmouth, 23, 97, 203.
"Yarmouth," the ship, 67.
York, Duke of (Prince Edward), 192, 193, 200, 216.
Young, Admiral, 218, 306.

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